

THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

NOVEMBER, 1875.

The Band of Ethelberta.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF THE HALL—THE ROAD HOME.



ONDON was illuminated by the broad full moon. The pavements looked white as if mantled with snow; ordinary houses were sublimated to the rank of public buildings, public buildings to palaces, and the faces of women walking the streets to those of calendared saints and guardian-angels by the pure silver light from the sky.

In the quiet little street where opened the private door of the Hall chosen by Ethelberta for her story-telling, a brougham was waiting. The time was about eleven o'clock; and presently a lady came out from the building, the moonbeams forthwith flooding her face, which they showed to be that of the Story-teller herself. She hastened across to the carriage, when a second thought arrested her motion: telling the man-

servant and a female inside the brougham to wait for her, she wrapped up her features and glided round to the front of the building, where she paused to observe the carriages and cabs driving up to receive the fashionable crowd stepping down from the doors. Standing here in the

through which her own talent and ingenuity had drawn together, she appeared to enjoy herself by listening for a minute or two to the names of several persons of more or less distinction as they were called out, and then regarded attentively the faces of others of lesser degree: to scrutinise the latter was, as the event proved, the real object of the journey from round the corner. When nearly every one had left the doors, she turned back disappointed. Ethelberta had been fancying that her alienated lover Christopher was in the back rows to-night, but as far as could now be observed the hopeful supposition was a false one.

When she got round to the back again, a man came forward. It was Ladywell, whom she had spoken to already that evening. "Allow me to bring you your note-book, Mrs. Petherwin: I think you had forgotten it," he said. "I assure you that nobody has handled it but myself."

Ethelberta thanked him, and took the book. "I use it to look into between the parts, in case my memory should fail me," she exclaimed. "I remember that I did lay it down, now you remind me."

Ladywell had apparently more to say, and moved by her side towards the carriage; but she declined the arm he offered, and said not another word till he went on:

"Your triumph to-night was very great, and it was as much a triumph to me as to you," he said haltingly; "I cannot express my feeling—I cannot say half that I would. If I might only——"

"Thank you much," said Ethelberta, with dignity. "Thank you for bringing my book, but I must go home now. I know you will see that it is not necessary for us to be talking here."

"Yes—you are quite right," said the repressed young painter, struck by her seriousness. "Blame me—I ought to have known better. But perhaps a man—well, I will say it—a lover without indiscretion is no lover at all. Circumspection and devotion are a contradiction in terms. I saw that, and hoped that I might speak without real harm."

"You calculated how to be uncalculating, and are natural by art!" she said, with the slightest accent of sarcasm. "But pray do not attend me further—it is not at all necessary or desirable. My maid is in the carriage." She bowed, turned, and entered the vehicle, seating herself beside Picotee.

"It was harsh!" said Ladywell to himself, as he looked after the retreating carriage. "I was a fool; but it was harsh. Yet what man on earth likes a woman to show too great a readiness at first? She is right: she would be nothing without repulse! And he moved away in an opposite direction.

"What man was that?" said Picotee, as they drove along.

"Oh—a mere Mr. Ladywell: a painter of good family (infrequent combination, is it not?) to whom I have been sitting for what he calls an Idealization. He is a dreadful simpleton."

"Why did you choose him?"

"I did not: he chose me. But his silliness of behaviour is a hopeful sign for the picture. I have seldom known a man cunning with his brush who was not simple with his tongue; or, indeed, any skill in particular that was not allied to general stupidity."

"Your own skill is not like that, is it Berta?"

"In men—in men. I don't mean in women. How childish you are."

The slight depression at finding that Christopher was not present, which had followed Ethelberta's public triumph that evening, was covered over, if not removed, by Ladywell's declaration, and she reached home serene in spirit. That she had not the slightest notion of accepting the impulsive painter made little difference: a lover's arguments being apt to affect a lady's mood as much by measure as by weight. A useless declaration, like a rare china teacup with a hole in it, has its ornamental value in enlarging a collection.

No sooner had they entered the house than Mr. Julian's card was discovered; and Joey informed them that he had come to particularly speak to Ethelberta, quite forgetting that it was her evening for tale-telling.

This was real delight, for between her excitements Ethelberta had been seriously sick-hearted at the horrible possibility of his never calling again. But alas! for Christopher. There being nothing like a dead silence for getting one's offhand sweetheart into a corner, there is nothing like prematurely ending it for getting into that corner one's self.

"Now won't I punish him for daring to stay away so long!" she exclaimed, as soon as she got upstairs. "It is as bad to show constancy in your letters as fickleness in your heart at such a time as this."

"But I thought honesty was the best policy?" said Picotee.

"So it is, for the man's purpose. But don't you go believing in sayings, Picotee: they are all made by men, for their own advantages. Women who use public proverbs as a guide through events are those who have not ingenuity enough to make private ones as each event occurs."

She sat down, and rapidly wrote a line to Mr. Julian:—

"Connaught Crescent.

"I return from Mayfair Hall to find you have called. You will, I know, be good enough to excuse my saying what seems an unfriendly thing, when I assure you that the circumstances of my peculiar situation make it desirable, if not necessary. It is that I beg you not to give me the pleasure of a visit from you for some little time, for unhappily the frequency of your kind calls has been noticed; and I am now in fear that we may be talked about—invidiously—to the injury of us both. The town, or a section of it, has turned its bull's-eye upon me with a brightness which I did not in the least anticipate; and you will, I am sure, perceive how indispensable it is that I should be circumspect.

"Yours sincerely,

"E. PETHERWIN."

CHAPTER XXIII.

A STREET.—NEIGH'S ROOMS.—CHRISTOPHER'S ROOMS.

As soon as Ethelberta had driven off from the Hall, Ladywell turned back again; and, passing the front entrance, overtook his acquaintance Mr. Neigh, who had been one of the last to emerge. The two were going in the same direction, and they walked a short distance together.

"Has anything serious happened?" said Neigh, noticing an abstraction in his companion. "You don't seem in your usual mood to-night."

"Oh, it is only that affair between us," said Ladywell, as one who refrained from using a pistol upon himself because his life was not worth powder and shot.

"Affair? Between you and whom?"

"Her and myself, of course. It will be in every fellow's mouth now, I suppose!"

"But—not anything between yourself and Mrs. Petherwin?"

"A mere nothing. But surely you started, Neigh, when you suspected it just this moment?"

"No—you merely fancied that."

"Did she not speak well to-night! You were in the room, I believe?"

"Yes, I just turned in for half an hour: it seems that everybody does, so I thought I must. But I had no idea that you were feeble that way."

"It is very kind of you, Neigh—upon my word it is—very kind; and of course I appreciate the delicacy which—which——"

"What's kind?"

"I mean your well-intentioned plan for making me believe that nothing is known of this. But stories will of course get wind; and if our attachment has made more noise in the world than I intended it should, and causes any public interest, why—ha-ha!—it must. There is some little romance in it perhaps, and people will talk of matters of that sort between individuals of any repute—little as that is with one of the pair."

"Of course they will—of course. You are a rising man, remember, whom some day the world will delight to honour."

"Thank you for that, Neigh. Thank you sincerely."

"Not at all. It is merely justice to say it, and one must be generous to deserve thanks."

"Hah-hah!—that's very nicely put, and undeserved I am sure. And yet I need a word of that sort sometimes!"

"Genius is proverbially modest."

"Pray don't, Neigh—I don't deserve it, indeed. Of course it is well meant in you to recognise any slight powers—ha-ha!—but I don't deserve it. Certainly my self-assurance was never too great. 'Tis the misfortune of all children of art that they should be so dependent upon any scraps of praise they can pick up to help them along."

"And when that child gets so deep in love that you can only see the whites of his eyes——"

"Ah—now, Neigh—don't, I say!"

"But why did——"

"Why did I love her?"

"Yes, why did you love her."

"Ah, if I could only turn self-vivisector and watch the operation of my heart I should know!"

"My dear fellow, you must be very bad indeed to talk like that. A poet himself couldn't be cleaner gone."

"Now, don't chaff, Neigh; do anything, but don't chaff. You know that I am the easiest man in the world for taking it at most times. But I can't stand it now; I don't feel up to it. A glimpse of paradise, and then perdition. What would you do, Neigh?"

"She has refused you, then?"

"Well—not positively refused me; but it is so near it that a dull man couldn't tell the difference. I hardly can myself."

"How do you really stand with her?" said Neigh, with an anxiety ill-concealed.

"Off and on—neither one thing nor the other. I was determined to make an effort the last time she sat to me, and so I met her quite coolly, and spoke only of technicalities with a forced smile—you know that way of mine for drawing people out, eh, Neigh?"

"Quite, quite."

"A forced smile, as much as to say, 'I am obliged to entertain you, but as a mere model for art purposes.' But the deuce a bit did she care. And then I frequently looked to see what time it was, as the end of the sitting drew near—rather a rude thing to do as a rule."

"Of course. But that was your *finesse*. Ha-ha!—capital! Yet why not struggle against such slavery? It is regularly pulling you down. What's a woman's beauty, after all?"

"Well you may say so! a thing easier to feel than define," groaned Ladywell. "But its no use, Neigh—I can't help it as long as she repulses me so exquisitely! If she would only care for me a little, I might get to trouble less about her."

"And love her no more than one ordinarily does a girl by the time one gets irrevocably engaged to her. But I suppose she keeps you back so thoroughly that you carry on the old adoration with as much vigour as if it were a new fancy every time?"

"Partly yes and partly no! It's very true, and it's not true!"

"'Tis to be hoped she won't hate you outright, for then you would absolutely die of idolising her."

"Don't, Neigh!—still there's some truth in it—such is the perversity of our hearts. Fancy marrying such a woman!"

"We should feel as eternally united to her after years and years of marriage as to a dear new angel met at last night's dance."

"Exactly—just what I should have said. But did I hear you say 'We,' Neigh? You didn't say 'We should feel?'"

"Say we?—yes—of course—putting myself in your place just in the way of speaking—nothing more."

"Of course, of course; but one is such a fool at these times that one seems to detect a rival even in a trumpery pronoun! Were you never a little touched?"

"Not I. My heart is in the happy position of a country which has no history or debt."

"I suppose I should rejoice to hear it," said Ladywell. "But the consciousness of a fellow-sufferer being in just such another hole is such a relief always, and softens the sense of one's folly so very much."

"There's less Christianity in that sentiment than in your confessing to it, old fellow. I know the truth of it nevertheless, and that's why married men advise others to marry. Were all the world tied up the pleasantly tied ones would be equivalent to those at present free. But what if your fellow-sufferer is not only in another such a hole, but in the same one?"

"No, Neigh—never! Don't trifle with a friend who——"

"That is, refused like yourself, as well as in love."

"Ah, thanks, thanks! It suddenly occurred to me that we might be dead against one another as rivals, and a friendship of many long—days be snapt like a—like a reed."

"No—no—only a jest," said Neigh, with a strangely accelerated speech. "Love-making is an ornamental pursuit that matter-of-fact fellows like me are quite unfit for. A man must have courted at least half-a-dozen women before he's a match for one; and since triumph lies so far ahead I shall keep out of the contest altogether."

"Your life would be pleasanter if you were engaged. It is a nice thing, after all."

"It is. The worst of it would be that when the time came for breaking it off a fellow might get into an action for breach—women are so fond of that sort of thing now; and I hate love-affairs that don't end peaceably!"

"But end it by peaceably marrying, my dear fellow."

"It would seem so singular. Besides, I have a horror of antiquity: and you see, as long as a man keeps single, he belongs in a measure to the rising generation, however old he may be; but as soon as he marries and has children, he belongs to the last generation, however young he may be. Old Jones's son is a deal younger than young Brown's father, though they are both the same age."

"At any rate honest courtship cures a man of many evils he had no power to stem before."

"By substituting an incurable matrimony!"

"Ah—two persons must have a mind for that before it can happen!" said Ladywell, sorrowfully shaking his head.

"I think you'll find that if one has a mind for it, it will be quite sufficient. But here we are at my rooms. Come in for half an hour?"

"Not to-night, thanks!"

They parted, and Neigh went in. When he got upstairs he murmured in his deepest chest note, "Oh, lords, that I should come to this! But I shall never be such a fool as to marry her! What a flat that poor young devil was not to discover that we were tarred with the same brush. Oh, the deuce! the deuce!" he continued, walking about the room as if passionately stamping, but not quite doing it because another man had rooms below.

Neigh drew from his pocket-book an envelope embossed with the name of a fashionable photographer, and out of this pulled a portrait of the lady who had, in fact, enslaved his secret self equally with his frank young friend the painter. After contemplating it awhile with a face of cynical adoration, he murmured, shaking his head, "Ah, my lady; if you only knew this, I should be snapped up like a snail! Not a minute's peace for me till I had married you. I wonder if I shall!—I wonder."

Neigh was a man of five and thirty—Ladywell's senior by ten years; and being of a phlegmatic temperament, he had glided thus far through the period of eligibility with impunity; but it is doubtful if his mind that night were less disturbed with the question how to guide himself out of the natural course which his passion for Ethelberta might tempt him into than was Ladywell's by his ardent wish to secure her.

About the time at which Neigh and Ladywell parted company, Christopher Julian was entering his little place in Bloomsbury. The quaint figure of Faith, in her bonnet and cloak, was kneeling on the hearthrug, endeavouring to stir a dull fire into a bright one.

"What—Faith; you have never been out alone?" he said.

Faith's soft quick-shutting eyes looked unutterable things, and she replied, "I have been to hear Mrs. Petherwin's story-telling again."

"And walked all the way home through the streets at this time of night, I suppose!"

"Well, nobody molested me, either going or coming back."

"Faith, I gave you strict orders not to go into the streets after two o'clock in the day, and now here you are taking no notice of what I say at all!"

"The truth is, Kit, I wanted to see with my spectacles what this woman was really like, and I went without them last time. I slipped in behind, and nobody saw me."

"I don't think much of her after what I have seen to-night," said Christopher, moodily recurring to a previous thought.

"Why? What is the matter?"

"I thought I would call on her this afternoon, but when I got there I found she had left early for the performance. So in the evening when I thought it would be all over, I went to the private door of the Hall to speak to her as she came out and ask her flatly a question or two which I was fool enough to think I must ask her before I went to bed. Just as I was drawing near she came out, and instead of getting into the brougham that

was waiting for her, she went round the corner. When she came back a man met her and gave her something, and they stayed talking together two or three minutes. The meeting may certainly not have been intentional on her part; but she has no business to be going on so coolly when—when—in fact, I have come to the conclusion that a woman's affection is not worth having. The only feeling which has any dignity or permanence or worth is family affection between close blood-relations."

"And yet you snub me sometimes, Mr. Kit."

"And for the matter of that, you snub me. Still you know what I mean—there's none of that off-and-on humbug between us. If we grumble with one another we are united just the same: if we don't write when we are parted, we are just the same when we meet—there has been some rational reason for silence; but as for lovers and sweethearts, there is nothing worth a rush in what they feel!"

Faith said nothing in reply to this. The opinions she had formed upon the wisdom of her brother's pursuit of Ethelberta would have come just then with an ill grace. It must, however, have been evident to Christopher, had he not been too preoccupied for observation, that Faith's impressions of Ethelberta were not quite favourable as regarded her womanhood, notwithstanding that she greatly admired her talents.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ETHELBERTA'S HOUSE.

ETHELBERTA came indoors one day from the University boat-race, and sat down, without speaking, beside Picotee, as if lost in thought.

"Did you enjoy the sight?" said Picotee.

"I scarcely know. We couldn't see at all from Mrs. Belmaine's carriage, so two of us—very rashly—agreed to get out and be rowed across to the other side where the people were quite few. But when the boatman had us in the middle of the river he declared he couldn't land us on the other side because of the barges; so there we were in a dreadful state—tossed up and down like corks upon great waves made by steamers till I made up my mind for a drowning. Well, at last we got back again, but couldn't reach the carriage for the crowd; and I don't know what we should have done if a gentleman hadn't come—sent by Mrs. Belmaine, who was in a great fright about us; then I was introduced to him, and—I wonder how it will end!"

"Was there anything so wonderful in the beginning, then?"

"Yes. One of the coolest and most practised men in London was ill-mannered towards me from sheer absence of mind—and could there be higher flattery? When a man of that sort does not give you the politeness you deserve, it means that in his heart he is rebelling against another

feeling which his pride suggests that you do not deserve. Oh, I forgot to say that he is a Mr. Neigh, a nephew of Mr. Doncastle's, who lives at ease about Piccadilly and Pall Mall, and has a few acres somewhere—but I don't know much of him. The worst of my position now is that I excite this superficial interest in many people and a deep friendship in nobody. If what all my supporters feel could be collected into the hearts of two or three they would love me better than they love themselves; but now it pervades all and operates in none."

"But it must operate in this gentleman?"

"Well, yes—just for the present. But men in town have so many contrivances for getting out of love that you can't calculate upon keeping them in for two days together. However, it is all the same to me. There's only—but let that be."

"What is there only?" said Picotee, coaxingly.

"Only one man," murmured Ethelberta in much lower tones. "I mean, whose wife I should care to be; and the very qualities I like in him will, I fear, prevent his ever being in a position to ask me."

"Is he the man you punished the night before last by forbidding him to come?"

"Perhaps he is; but he does not want civility from me. Where there's much feeling, there's little ceremony."

"It certainly seems that he does not want civility from you to make him attentive to you," said Picotee, stifling a sigh; "for here is a letter in his handwriting, I believe."

"You might have given it to me at once," said Ethelberta, opening the envelope hastily. It contained very few sentences: they were to the effect that Christopher had received her letter forbidding him to call; that he had therefore at first resolved not to call or ever see her more, since he had become such a shadow upon her path. Still, as it was always best to do nothing hastily, he had on second thoughts decided to ask her to grant him a last special favour, and see him again just once, for a few minutes only that afternoon, in which he might at least say Farewell. To avoid all possibility of compromising her in anybody's eyes, he would call at half-past six, when other callers were likely to be gone, knowing that from the peculiar constitution of her household the hour would not interfere with her arrangements. There being no time for an answer, he would assume that she would see him, and keep the engagement; the request being one which could not rationally be objected to.

"There—read it!" said Ethelberta, with glad displeasure. "Did you ever hear such audacity? Fixing a time so soon that I cannot reply, and thus making capital out of haste, as a pretended necessity, when it is really an arbitrary arrangement of his own. That's real rebellion—forcing himself into my house when I said strictly he was not to come; and then, that it cannot rationally be objected to—I don't like his 'rationally.'"

"Where there's much love there's little ceremony, didn't you say just now?" observed innocent Picotee.

"And where there's little love, no ceremony at all. These manners of his are dreadful, and I believe he will never improve."

"It makes you care not a bit about him, does it not, Berta?" said Picotee, hopefully.

"I don't answer for that," said Ethelberta. "I feel, as many others do, that a blindness to ceremony which is produced by abstraction of mind is no defect in a poet or musician, fatal as it may be to an ordinary man."

"Mighty me! You soon forgive him!"

"Picotee, don't you be so quick to speak. Before I have finished, how do you know what I am going to say? I'll never tell you anything again, if you take me up so. Of course I am going to punish him at once, and make him remember that I am a lady, even if I do like him a little."

"How do you mean to punish him?" said Picotee, with interest.

"By writing and telling him that on no account is he to come."

"But there is not time for a letter——"

"That doesn't matter. It will show him that I did not *mean* him to come."

At hearing the very merciful nature of the punishment, Picotee sighed without replying; and Ethelberta despatched her note.

The hour of appointment drew near, and Ethelberta showed symptoms of unrest. Six o'clock struck and passed. She walked here and there for nothing, and it was plain that a dread was filling her: her letter might accidentally have had, in addition to the moral effect which she had intended, the practical effect which she did not, by arriving before, instead of after, his purposed visit to her.

"How long are letters going to Bloomsbury?" she said suddenly.

"Two hours, Joey tells me," replied Picotee, who had already enquired on her own private account.

"There!" exclaimed Ethelberta, petulantly. "How I dislike a man to pretend things. He said there was not time for a reply!"

"Perhaps he didn't know," said Picotee, in angel tones; "and so it happens all right, and he has got it, and he will not come after all."

They waited and waited, but Christopher did not appear that night; the true case being that his declaration about insufficient time for a reply was merely an ingenious suggestion to her not to be so cruel as to forbid him. He was far from suspecting when the letter of denial did reach him—about an hour before the time of appointment—that it was sent by a refinement of art, of which the real intention was futility, and that but for his own mis-statement it would have been carefully delayed.

The next day another letter came from the musician, decidedly short and to the point. The irate lover stated that he would not be made a fool of any longer: under any circumstances he meant to come that self-same afternoon, and should decidedly expect her to see him.

"I will not see him!" said Ethelberta. "Why did he not call last night?"

"Because you told him not to," said Picotee.

"Good gracious, as if a woman's words are to be translated as literally as Homer! Surely he is aware that more often than not 'No' is said to a man's importunities because it is traditionally the correct modest reply, and for nothing else in the world. If all men took words as superficially as he does, we should die of decorum in shoals."

"Ah, Berta! how could you write a letter that you did not mean should be obeyed?"

"I did in a measure mean it, although I could have shown Christian forgiveness if it had not been. Never mind; I will not see him. I'll plague my heart for the credit of my sex."

To ensure the fulfilment of this resolve, Ethelberta determined to give way to a headache that she was beginning to be aware of, go to her room, disorganise her dress, and ruin her hair by lying down; so putting it out of her power to descend and meet Christopher on any momentary impulse.

Picotee sat in the room with her, reading, or pretending to read, and Ethelberta pretended to sleep. Christopher's knock came up the stairs, and with it the end of the farce.

"I'll tell you what," said Ethelberta, in the prompt and broadly-awake tone of one who had been concentrated on the expectation of that incident for a length of time, "it was a mistake in me to do this! Joey will be sure to make a muddle of it."

Joey was heard coming up the stairs. Picotee opened the door, and said, with an anxiety transcending Ethelberta's, "Well?"

"Oh, will you tell Mrs. Petherwin that Mr. Julian says he'll wait."

"You were not to ask him to wait," said Ethelberta within.

"I know that," said Joey, "and I didn't. He's doing that out of his own head."

"Then let Mr. Julian wait by all means," said Ethelberta. "Allow him to wait if he likes, but tell him it is uncertain if I shall be able to come down."

Joey then retired, and the two sisters remained in silence.

"I wonder if he's gone," Ethelberta said at the end of a long time.

"I thought you were asleep," said Picotee. "Shall we ask Joey? I have not heard the door close."

Joey was summoned, and after a leisurely ascent, interspersed by various gymnastic performances over the handrail here and there, appeared again.

"He's there jest the same: he don't seem to be in no hurry at all," said Joey.

"What is he doing?" inquired Picotee, solicitously.

"Oh, only looking at his watch sometimes, and humming tunes, and playing rat-a-tat-tat upon the table. He says he don't mind waiting a bit."

"You must have made a mistake in the message," said Ethelberta within.

"Well no. I was correct as a jeneral thing. I jest said, perhaps you would be engaged all the evening, and perhaps you wouldn't."

When Joey had again retired, and they had waited another ten minutes, Ethelberta said, "Picotee, do you go down and speak a few words to him. I am determined he shall not see me. You know him a little: you remember when he came to the Lodge?"

"What must I say to him?"

Ethelberta paused before replying. "Try to find out if—he is much grieved at not seeing me, and say—give him to understand that I will forgive him, Picotee."

"Very well."

"And Picotee——"

"Yes."

"If he says he *must* see me—I think I will get up. But only if he says *must*: you remember that."

Picotee departed on her errand. She paused on the staircase trembling, and thinking between the thrills how very far would have been the conduct of her poor slighted self from proud recalcitration had Mr. Julian's gentle request been addressed to her instead of to Ethelberta; and she went some way in the painful discovery of how much more tantalizing it was to watch an envied situation that was held by another, than to be out of sight of it altogether. Here was Christopher waiting to bestow love, and Ethelberta not going down to receive it: a commodity unequalled in value by any other in the whole wide world was being wantonly wasted within that very house. If she could only have stood to-night as the beloved Ethelberta, and not as the despised Picotee, how different would be this going down! Thus she went along, red and pale moving in her cheeks as in the Northern Lights at their strongest time.

Meanwhile Christopher had sat waiting minute by minute till the evening shades grew browner, and the fire sank low. Joey, finding himself not particularly wanted upon the premises after the second enquiry, had slipped out to witness a nigger performance round the corner, and Julian began to think himself forgotten by all the household. The perception gradually cooled his emotions, and enabled him to hold his hat quite steadily.

When Picotee gently thrust open the door she was surprised to find the room in darkness, the fire gone completely out, and the form of Christopher only visible by a faint patch of light, which, coming from a house on the opposite side of the way and falling upon the mirror, was thrown as a pale nebulosity upon his shoulder. Picotee was too flurried at sight of the familiar outline to know what to do, and instead of going or calling for a light she mechanically advanced into the room. Christopher did not turn or move in any way, and then she perceived that he had begun to doze in his chair.

Instantly, with the precipitancy of the timorous, she said, "Mr. Julian!" and touched him on the shoulder—murmuring then, "Oh, I beg pardon, I—I will get a light."

Christopher's consciousness returned, and his first act, before rising, was to exclaim, in a confused manner, "Ah—you have come—thank you, Berta!" then impulsively to seize her hand, as it hung beside his head, and kiss it warmly. He stood up, still holding her fingers.

Picotee gasped out something, but was completely deprived of articulate utterance, and in another moment, being unable to control herself at this sort of first meeting with the man she had gone through fire and water to be near, and more particularly by the overpowering kiss upon her hand, not meant for hers at all, burst into hysterical sobbing. Julian, in his inability to imagine so much emotion—or at least the exhibition of it—in Ethelberta, gently drew Picotee further forward by the hand he held, and utilized the solitary spot of light from the mirror by making it fall upon her face. Recognising the childish features, he at once, with an exclamation, dropped her hand and started back. Being in point of fact a complete bundle of nerves and nothing else, his thin figure shook like a harp-string in painful excitement at a contretemps which would scarcely have quickened the pulse of an ordinary man.

Poor Picotee, feeling herself in the wind of a civil d——, started back also, sobbing more than ever. It was a little too much that the first result of his discovery of the mistake should be absolute repulse. She leant against the mantelpiece, when Julian, much bewildered at her superfluity of emotion, assisted her to a seat in sheer humanity. But Christopher was by no means pleased when he again thought round the circle of circumstances.

"How could you allow such an absurd thing to happen?" he said, in a stern, though trembling voice. You knew I might mistake. I had no idea you were in the house: I thought you were miles away at Sandbourne or somewhere! But I see: it is just done for a joke, ha-ha!"

This made Picotee rather worse still. "O-o-o-oh!" she replied, in the tone of pouring from a bottle. "What shall I do-o-o-o! It is—not done for a—joke at all-l-l l-l!"

"Not done for a joke? Then never mind—don't cry, Picotee. What was it done for, I wonder?"

Picotee, mistaking the purport of his enquiry, imagined him to refer to her arrival in the house, quite forgetting, in her guilty sense of having come on his account, that he would have no right or thought of asking questions about a natural visit to a sister, and she said: "When you—went away from—Sandbourne, I—I—I did'n't know what to do, and then I ran away, and came here, and then Ethelberta—was angry with me; but she says I may stay; but she doesn't know—that I know you, and how we used to meet along the road every morning—and I am afraid to tell her—Oh, what shall I do!"

"Never mind it," said Christopher, a sense of the true state of her case dawning upon him with unpleasant distinctness, and bringing some irritation at his awkward position; though it was impossible to be long angry with a girl who had not reasoning foresight enough to perceive that

doubtful pleasure and certain pain must be the result of any meeting whilst hearts were at cross purposes in this way.

"Where is your sister?" he asked.

"She wouldn't come down, unless she *must*," said Picotee. "You have vexed her, and she has a headache besides that, and I came instead."

"So that I mightn't be wasted altogether. Well, it's a strange business between the three of us. I have heard of one-sided love, and reciprocal love, and all sorts, but this is my first experience of a concatenated affection. You follow me, I follow Ethelberta, and she follows—Heaven knows who!"

"Mr. Ladywell!" said the mortified Picotee.

"Good Lord, if I didn't think so!" said Christopher, feeling to the soles of his feet like a man in a legitimate drama.

"No, no, no!" said the frightened girl, hastily. "I am not sure it is Mr. Ladywell. That's altogether a mistake of mine!"

"Ah, yes, you want to screen her," said Christopher, with a withering smile at the spot of light. Very sisterly, doubtless; but none of that will do for me. I am too old a bird by far—by very far! Now are you sure she does not love Ladywell?"

"Yes!"

"Well, perhaps I blame her wrongly. She may have some little faith in her—a woman has, here and there. How do you know she does not love Ladywell?"

"Because she would prefer Mr. Neigh to him, any day."

"Ha!"

"No, no—you mistake, sir—she doesn't love either at all—Ethelberta doesn't. I meant that she cannot love Mr. Ladywell because he stands lower in her opinion than Mr. Neigh, and him she certainly does not care for. She only loves you. If you only knew how true she is you wouldn't be so suspicious about her, and I wish I had not come here—yes I do!"

"I cannot tell what to think of it. Perhaps I don't know much of this world after all, or what girls will do. But you don't excuse her to me, Picotee."

Before this time Picotee had been simulating haste in getting a light; but in her dread of appearing visibly to Christopher's eyes, and showing him the precise condition of her tear-stained face, she put it off moment after moment, and stirred the fire, in hope that the faint illumination thus produced would be sufficient to save her from the charge of stupid conduct as entertainer.

Fluttering about on the horns of this dilemma, she was greatly relieved when Christopher, who read her difficulty, and the general painfulness of the situation, said that since Ethelberta was really suffering from a headache he would not wish to disturb her till to-morrow, and went off downstairs and into the street without further ceremony.

Meanwhile other things had transpired upstairs. No sooner had

Picotee left her sister's room, than Ethelberta thought it would after all have been much better if she had gone down herself to speak to this admirably persistent lover. Was she not drifting somewhat into the character of coquette, even if her ground of offence—a word of Christopher's about somebody else's mean parentage, which was spoken in utter forgetfulness of her own position, but had wounded her to the quick nevertheless—was to some extent a tenable one. She knew what facilities in suffering Christopher always showed; how a touch to other people was a blow to him, a blow to them his deep wound, although he took such pains to look stolid and unconcerned under those inflictions, and tried to smile as if he had no feelings whatever. It would be more generous to go down to him, and be kind. She jumped up with that alertness which comes so spontaneously at those sweet bright times when desire and duty run hand in hand.

She hastily set her hair and dress in order—not such matchless order as she could have wished them to be in, but time was precious—and descended the stairs. When on the point of pushing open the drawing-room door, which wanted about an inch of being closed, she was astounded to discover that the room was in total darkness, and still more to hear Picotee sobbing inside. To retreat again was the only action she was capable of at that moment: the clash between this picture and the anticipated scene of Picotee and Christopher sitting in frigid propriety at opposite sides of a well-lighted room was too great. She flitted upstairs again with the least possible rustle, and flung herself down on the couch as before, panting with excitement at the new knowledge that had come to her.

There was only one possible construction to be put upon this in Ethelberta's rapid mind, and that approximated to the true one. She had known for some time that Picotee once had a lover, or something akin to it, and that he had disappointed her in a way which had never been told. No stranger, save in the capacity of the one beloved, could wound a woman sufficiently to make her weep, and it followed that Christopher was the man of Picotee's choice. As Ethelberta recalled the conversations, conclusion after conclusion came like pulsations in an aching head. "Oh, how did it happen, and who is to blame!" she exclaimed. "I cannot doubt his faith, and I cannot doubt hers; and yet how can I keep doubting them both?"

It was characteristic of Ethelberta's jealous motherly guard over her young sisters that, amid these contending enquiries, her foremost feeling was less one of hope for her own love than of championship for Picotee's.

CHAPTER XXV.

ETHELBERTA'S HOUSE.—(continued.)

PICOTEE was heard on the stairs: Ethelberta covered her face.

"Is he waiting?" she said faintly, on finding that Picotee did not begin to speak.

"No; he is gone," said Picotee.

"Ah, why is that," came quickly from under the handkerchief.

"He has forgotten me—that's what it is!"

"Oh no, he has not!" said Picotee just as bitterly.

Ethelberta had far too much heroism to let much in this strain escape her, though her sister was prepared to go any lengths in the same. "I suppose," continued Ethelberta, in the quiet way of one who had only a headache the matter with her, "that he remembered you after the meeting at Anglebury?"

"Yes, he remembered me."

"Did you tell me you had seen him before that time?"

"I had seen him at Sandbourne. I don't think I told you."

"At whose house did you meet him?"

"At nobody's. I only saw him sometimes," replied Picotee, in great distress.

Ethelberta, though of all women most miserable, was brimming with compassion for the throbbing girl so nearly related to her, in whom she continually saw her own weak points without the counterpoise of her strong ones. But it was necessary to repress herself awhile: the intended ways of her life were blocked and broken up by this jar of interests, and she wanted time to ponder new plans. "Picotee, I would rather be alone now, if you don't mind," she said. "You need not leave me any light; it makes my eyes ache, I think."

Picotee left the room. But Ethelberta had not long been alone and in darkness when somebody gently opened the door, and entered without a candle.

"Berta," said the soft voice of Picotee again; "may I come?"

"Oh yes," said Ethelberta. "Has everything gone right with the house this evening?"

"Yes; and Gwendoline went out just now to buy a few things, and she is going to call round upon father when he has got his dinner cleared away."

"I hope she will not stay and talk to the other servants. Some day she will let drop something or other before father can stop her."

"Oh, Berta!" said Picotee, close beside her. She was kneeling in front of the couch, and now flinging her arm across Ethelberta's shoulder and shaking violently, she pressed her forehead against her sister's temple, and breathed out upon her cheek:

"I came in again to tell you something which I ought to have told you just now, and I have come to say it at once because I am afraid I shan't be able to to-morrow. Mr. Julian was the young man I spoke to you of a long time ago, and I should have told you all about him, but you said he was your young man too, and—and I didn't know what to do then, because I thought it was wrong in me to love your young man; and Berta, he didn't mean me to love him at all, but I did it myself, though I did not want to do it, either; it would come to me! And I didn't know he belonged to you when I began it, or I would not have let him meet me at all; no I wouldn't!"

"Meet you? You don't mean to say he used to meet you?" whispered Ethelberta.

"Yes," said Picotee; "but he could not help it. We used to meet on the road, and there was no other road unless I had gone ever so far round. But it is worse than that, Berta! That was why I couldn't bide in Sandbourne, and, and ran away to you up here; it was not because I wanted to see you, Berta, but because I—I wanted——"

"Yes, yes, I know," said Ethelberta hurriedly.

"And then when I went down stairs he mistook me for you for a moment, and that caused—a confusion!"

"Oh well, it does not much matter," said Ethelberta, kissing Picotee, soothingly. "You ought not of course to have come to London in such a manner; but since you have come, we will make the best of it. Perhaps it may end happily for you and for him. Who knows?"

"Then don't you want him, Berta?"

"Oh no; not at all!"

"What—and don't you *really* want him, Berta?" repeated Picotee, starting up.

"I would much rather he paid his addresses to you. He is not the sort of man I should wish to—think it best to marry, even if I were to marry, which I have no intention of doing at present. He calls to see me because we are old friends, but his calls do not mean anything more than that he takes an interest in me. It is not at all likely that I shall see him again! and I certainly never shall see him unless you are present."

"That will be very nice."

"Yes. And you will be always distant towards him, and go to leave the room when he comes, when I will call you back; but suppose we continue this to-morrow? I can tell you better than what to do."

When Picotee had left her the second time, Ethelberta turned over upon her breast and shook in convulsive sobs which had little relationship with tears. This abandonment ended as suddenly as it had begun—not lasting more than a minute and half altogether—and she got up in an unconsidered and unusual impulse to seek relief from the stinging sarcasm of this event—the unhappy love of Picotee—by naming something of it to another member of the family, her eldest sister Gwendoline, who was a woman full of sympathy.

Ethelberta descended to the kitchen, it being now about ten o'clock. The room was empty, Gwendoline not having yet returned, and Cornelia being busy about her own affairs upstairs. The French family had gone to the theatre, and the house on that account was very quiet to-night. Ethelberta sat down in the dismal place without turning up the gas, and in a few minutes admitted Gwendoline.

The round-faced country cook floundered in, untying her bonnet as she came, laying it down on a chair, and talking at the same time. "Such a place as this London is to be sure!" she exclaimed, turning on the gas till it whistled. "I wish I was down in Wessex again. Lord-a-mercy, Berta, I didn't see it was you!—I thought it was Cornelia. As I was saying, I thought that after biding in this underground cellar all the week, making up messes for them French folk and never pleasing 'em, and never shall, because I don't understand that line, I thought I would go out and see father, you know."

"Is he very well?" said Ethelberta.

"Yes; and he is going to call round when he has time. Well, as I was coming home-along I thought, please the Lord I'll have some chippols for supper just for a plain trate, and I went round to the late greengrocer's for 'em; and do you know they swore'd me down that they hadn't got such things as chippols in the shop, and had never heard of 'em in their lives. At last I said, 'Why, how can you tell me such a brazen story?—here they be, heaps of 'em!' It made me so vexed that I came away there and then, and wouldn't have one—no, not at a gift."

"They call them young onions here," said Ethelberta quietly; "you must always remember that. But, Gwendoline, I wanted——"

Ethelberta felt sick at heart, and stopped. She had come down on the wings of an impulse to unfold her trouble about Picotee to her hard-headed and much older sister, less for advice than to get some heart-ease by interchange of words; but alas, she could proceed no further. The wretched homeliness of Gwendoline's mind seemed at this particular juncture to be absolutely intolerable, and Ethelberta was suddenly convinced that to involve Gwendoline in any such discussion would be increasing her own burden, and adding worse confusion to her sister's already confused existence.

"What were you going to say?" said the honest and unsuspecting Gwendoline.

"I will put it off until to-morrow," Ethelberta murmured gloomily; "I have a bad headache, and will not stay with you after all."

As she ascended the stairs, Ethelberta ached with an added pain not much less than the primary one which had brought her down. It was that old sense of disloyalty to her class and kin by feeling as she felt now which caused the pain; and there was no escaping it. Gwendoline would have gone to the ends of the earth for her: she could not confide a thought to Gwendoline!

"If she only knew of that unworthy feeling of mine how she would grieve," said Ethelberta miserably.

She next went up to the servants' bedrooms, and to where Cornelia slept. On Ethelberta's entry Cornelia looked up from a perfect wonder of a bonnet, which she held in her hands. At sight of Ethelberta, the look of keen interest in her work changed to one of gaiety.

"I am so glad—I was just coming down," Cornelia said in a whisper; whenever they spoke as relations in this house it was in whispers. "Now, how do you think this bonnet will do? May I come down, and see how I look in your big glass?" She clapped the bonnet upon her head. "Won't it do beautiful for Sunday afternoon?"

"It looks very attractive, as far as I can see by this light," said Ethelberta. "But is it not rather too brilliant in colour—blue and red together, like that? Remember, as I often tell you, people in town never wear such bright contrasts as they do in the country."

"O, Berta!" said Cornelia, in a deprecating tone; "don't object. If there's one thing I do glory in it is a nice flare-up about my head o'Sundays—of course if the family's not in mourning, I mean." But seeing that Ethelberta did not smile she turned the subject, and added docilely: "Did you come up for me to do anything? I will put off finishing my bonnet, if I am wanted?"

"I was going to talk to you about family matters, and Picotee," said Ethelberta. "But as you are busy, and I have a headache, I will put it off till to-morrow."

Cornelia seemed decidedly relieved, for family matters were far from attractive at the best of times; and Ethelberta went down to the next floor, and entered her mother's room.

"You say you want to ask me something?" said Mrs. Chickereel, after a short conversation.

"Yes; but nothing of importance, mother. I was thinking about Picotee, and what would be the best thing to do ——"

"Ah, well you may, Berta. I am so uneasy about this life you have led us into, and full of fear that your plans may break down; if they do, whatever will become of us! I know you are doing your best; but I cannot help thinking that the coming to London and living with you was wild and rash, and not well weighed afore we set about it. You should have counted the cost first, and not advised it. If you break down, and we are all discovered living so queer and unnatural, right in the heart of the aristocracy, we should be the laughing-stock of the country: it would kill me, and ruin us all—utterly ruin us!"

"Oh, mother, I know all that so well!" exclaimed Ethelberta, tears of anguish filling her eyes. "Don't depress me more than I depress myself by such fears, or you will bring about the very thing we strive to avoid! My only chance is in keeping in good spirits; and why don't you try to help me a little by taking a brighter view of things?"

"I know I ought to, my dear girl, but I cannot. I do so wish that I had never let you tempt me and the children away from the lodge. I cannot think why I allowed myself to be so persuaded—cannot think!

You are not to blame—it is I. I was much older than you, and ought to have known better than listen to such a scheme. This undertaking seems too big—the bills frighten me. I have never been used to such wild adventure, and I can't sleep at night for fear that your tale-telling will go wrong, and we shall all be exposed and ashamed. A story-teller seems such an impossible castle-in-the-air sort of a trade for getting a living by—I cannot think however you came to dream of such an unheard-of thing!”

“But it is *not* a castle in the air, and it *does* get a living!” said Ethelberta, her lip quivering.

“Well, yes, while it is just a new thing; but I am afraid it cannot last—that's what I fear. People will find you out as one of a family of servants, and their pride will be stung at having gone to hear your romancing; then they will go no more, and what will happen then to us and the poor little ones?”

“We must all scatter again!”

“If we could get as we were once, I wouldn't mind that. But we shall have lost our character as simple country folk who know nothing, which are the only class of poor people that squires will give any help to; and I much doubt if the girls would get places after such a discovery—it would be so awkward and unheard of.”

“Well, all I can say is,” replied Ethelberta, “that I will do my best. All that I have is theirs and yours as much as mine, and these arrangements are simply on their account. I don't like my relations being my servants; but if they did not work for me, they would have to work for others, and my service is much lighter and pleasanter than any other lady's would be for them, so the advantages are worth the risk. If I stood alone I would go and hide my head in any hole, and care no more about the world and its ways. I wish I was well out of it, and at the bottom of a quiet grave—anybody might have the world for me then!—But don't let me disturb you longer; it is getting late.”

Ethelberta then wished her mother good-night, and went away. To attempt confidences on such an ethereal matter as love was now absurd; her hermit spirit was doomed to dwell apart as usual; and she applied herself to deep thinking without aid and alone. Not only was there Picotee's misery to disperse; it became imperative to consider how best to overpass a more general catastrophe.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ETHELBERTA'S HOUSE, *continued*.—THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

Mrs. CHICKEREL, in deploring the risks of their present speculative mode of life, was far from imagining that signs of the foul future so much dreaded were actually apparent to Ethelberta at the time the lament was spoken. Hence the daughter's uncommon sensitiveness to prophesy. It

was as if a dead-reckoner poring over his chart should remark that breakers were possible ahead to one who already beheld them.

That her story-telling would prove so attractive Ethelberta had not ventured to expect for a moment when she first originated the undertaking: that having once proved attractive there should be any falling-off until such time had elapsed as would enable her to harvest some solid fruit by her labour was equally a surprise. Future expectations are often based without hesitation upon one happy accident, when the only condition remaining to subsequent sets of circumstances is that the same person forms the centre of them. Her situation was so peculiar, and so unlike that of most public people, that there was hardly an argument explaining this triumphant opening which could be used in a fair calculation as to its close; unless, indeed, more strategy were employed in the conduct of the campaign than Ethelberta seemed to show at present.

There was no denying that she commanded less attention than at first: the audience had lessened, and, judging by appearances, might soon be expected to be decidedly thin. In excessive lowness of spirit, Ethelberta translated these signs with the bias that a lingering echo of her mother's dismal words naturally induced, reading them as conclusive evidence that her adventure had been chimerical in its birth. Yet it was very far less conclusive than she supposed. Public interest might without doubt have been renewed after a due interval, some of the falling-off being only an accident of the season. Her novelties had been hailed with pleasure the rather that their freshness tickled than that their intrinsic merit was appreciated; and like many inexperienced dispensers of a unique charm Ethelberta, by bestowing too liberally and too frequently, was destroying the very element upon which its popularity depended. Her entertainment had been good in its conception, and partly good in its execution; yet her success had but little to do with that goodness. Indeed, what might be called its badness in a histrionic sense, that is, her look sometimes of being out of place—the sight of a beautiful woman on a platform, revealing tender airs of domesticity which showed her to belong by character to a quiet drawing-room, had been primarily an attractive feature. But alas, custom was staling this by improving her up to the mark of an utter impersonator, thereby eradicating the pretty abashments of a poetess out of her sphere; and more than one well-wisher who observed Ethelberta from afar feared that it might some day come to be said of her that she had

Enfeoffed herself to popularity:
That, being daily swallow'd by men's eyes,
They surfeited with honey, and began
To loathe the taste of sweetness, whereof a little
More than a little is by much too much.

But this in its extremity was not quite yet.

We discover her one day at this time sitting before a table strewed with accounts and bills from different tradesmen of the neighbourhood,

which she examined with a pale face, collecting their totals on a blank sheet. Picotee came into the room, but Ethelberta took no notice whatever of her. The younger sister, who subsisted on scraps of notice and favour as like a dependent animal, even if these were only an occasional glance of the eye, could not help saying at last, "Berta, how silent you are. I don't think you know I am in the room."

"I did not observe you," said Ethelberta. "I am very much engaged: these bills have to be paid."

"What, and cannot we pay them?" said Picotee, in vague alarm.

"Oh yes, I can pay them. The question is, how long shall I be able to do it."

"That is sad; and we are going on so nicely, too. It is not true that you have really decided to leave off story-telling now the people don't crowd to hear it as they did?"

"I think I shall leave off."

"And begin again next year?"

"That is very doubtful."

"I'll tell you what you might do," said Picotee, her face kindling with a sense of great originality. "You might travel about to country towns and tell your story splendidly."

"A man in my position might perhaps do it with impunity; but I could not without losing ground in other domains. A woman may drive to Mayfair from her house in Connaught Crescent, and speak from a platform there, and be supposed to do it as an original way of amusing herself; but when it comes to starring in the provinces she establishes herself as a woman of a different breed and habit. I wish I were a man! I would give up this house, advertise it to be let furnished, and sally forth with confidence. But I am driven to think of other ways to manage than that."

Picotee fell into a conjectural look, but could not guess.

"The way of marriage," said Ethelberta. "Otherwise perhaps the poetess may live to become what Dryden called himself when he got old and poor—a rent-charge on Providence. . . . Yes, I must try that way," she continued, with a sarcasm towards people out of hearing. "I must buy a *Peerage* for one thing, and a *Baronetage*, and a *House of Commons*, and a *Landed Gentry*, and learn what people are about me. I must go to *Doctors' Commons* and read up wills of the parents of any likely gudgeons I may know. I must get a *Herald* to invent an escutcheon of my family, and throw a genealogical tree into the bargain in consideration of my taking a few secondhand heirlooms of a pawnbroking friend of his. I must get up sham ancestors, and find out some notorious name to start my pedigree from. It does not matter what his character was: either villain or martyr will do, provided that he lived five hundred years ago. It would be considered far more creditable to make good my descent from Satan in the age when he went to and fro on the earth than from a ministering angel under Victoria."

"But, Berta, you are not going to marry any stranger?" said Picotee, who had creeping sensations of dread when Ethelberta talked like this.

"I had no such intention. But having once put my hand to the plough, how shall I turn back?"

"You might marry Mr. Ladywell," said Picotee, who preferred a return to the concrete.

"Yes, marry him villanously; in cold blood, without a moment to prepare himself."

"Ah, you won't!"

"I am not so sure about that. I have brought mother and the children to town against her judgment and against my father's: they gave way to my opinion as to one who from superior education has larger knowledge of the world than they. I must prove my promises, even if Heaven should fall upon me for it, or what a miserable future will theirs be. We must not be poor in London. Poverty in the country is a sadness, but poverty in town is a horror. There is something not without grandeur in the thought of starvation on an open mountain or in a wide wood, and your bones lying there to bleach in the pure sun and rain; but a back garret in Clare Market, and the other starvers in the room insisting on keeping the window shut—anything to deliver us from that."

"How gloomy you can be, Berta. It will never be so dreadful. Why, I can take in plain sewing, and you can do translations, and mother can knit stockings, and so on. How much longer will this house be yours?"

"Two years. If I keep it longer than that I shall have to pay rent at the rate of three hundred a year. The Petherwin estate provides me with it till then, which will be the end of Lady Petherwin's term."

"I see it; and you ought to marry before the house is gone, if you mean to marry high," murmured Picotee in an inadequate voice, as one in a world so tragic that any hope of her assisting therein was out of the question.

It was not long after this exposition of the family affairs that Christopher called upon them; but Picotee was not present, having gone to think of superhuman work on the spur of Ethelberta's awakening talk. There was something new in the way in which Ethelberta received the announcement of his name; passion had to do with it, so had circumspection; the latter most, for the first time since their re-union.

"I am going to leave this part of England," said Christopher, after a few gentle preliminaries. "I was one of the applicants for the post of organist at Melchester Cathedral when it became vacant, and I find I am likely to be chosen, through the interest of one of my father's friends."

"I congratulate you."

"No, Ethelberta, it is not worth that. I did not originally mean to follow this course at all; but events seemed to point to it in the absence of a better."

"I too am compelled to follow a course I did not originally mean to take." After saying no more for a few moments, she added, in a tone of

sudden openness, a richer tincture creeping up her cheek, "I want to put a question to you boldly—not exactly a question—a thought. Have you considered whether the relations between us which have lately prevailed are—are the best for you—and for me?"

"I know what you mean," said Christopher, hastily, "and I am glad you have given me the opportunity of speaking upon that subject. It has been very good and considerate in you to allow me to share your society so frequently as you have done since I have been in town, and to think of you as an object to exist for and strive for. But I ought to have remembered that, since you have nobody at your side to look after your interests, it behoved me to be doubly careful. In short, Ethelberta, I am not in a position to marry, nor can I discern when I shall be, and I feel it would be an injustice to ask you to be bound in any way to one lower and less talented than you. You cannot, from what you say, think it desirable that the engagement should continue. I have no right to ask you to be my betrothed, without having a near prospect of making you my wife. I don't mind saying this straight out—I have no fear that you will doubt my love; thank Heaven, you know what that is well enough! However, as things are, I wish you to know that I cannot conscientiously put in a claim upon your attention."

Christopher's meaning was written in his look, though he scarcely uttered it. A woman so delicately poised upon the social globe could not in honour be asked to wait for a lover who was unable to set bounds to the waiting period. Yet he had privily dreamed of an approach to that position—an unreserved, ideally perfect declaration from Ethelberta that time and practical issues were nothing to her; she would stand as fast without material hopes as with them; love was to be an end with her henceforth, having utterly ceased to be a means. Therefore this surreptitious hope of his, founded on no reasonable expectation, was like a guilty thing surprised when Ethelberta answered, with a predominance of judgment over passion still greater than before:—

"It was unspeakably generous in you to put it all before me so nicely, Christopher. I think infinitely more of you for being so unreserved, especially since I too have been thinking much on the indefiniteness of the days to come. We are not numbered among the blest few who can afford to trifle with the time. Yet to agree to anything like a positive parting will be quite unnecessary. You did not mean that, did you? for it is harsh if you did." Ethelberta smiled kindly as she said this, as much as to say that she was far from really upbraiding him. "Let it be only that we will see each other less. We will bear one another in mind as deeply attached friends if not as definite lovers, and keep up friendly remembrances of a sort which, come what may, will never have to be ended by any painful process termed breaking off. Different persons, different natures; and it may be that marriage would not be the most favourable atmosphere for our old affection to prolong itself in. When do you leave London?"

The disconnected query seemed to be subjoined to disperse the crude effect of what had gone before.

"I hardly know," muttered Christopher. "I suppose I shall not call here again."

Whilst they were silent somebody entered the room softly, and they turned to discover Picotee.

"Come here, Picotee," said Ethelberta.

Picotee came with an abashed bearing to where the other two were standing, and looked down stedfastly.

"Mr. Julian is going away," she continued, with determined firmness. "He will not see us again for a long time." And Ethelberta added in a lower tone, though still in the unflinching manner of one who had set herself to say a thing, and would say it:—"He is not to be definitely engaged to me any longer. We are not thinking of marrying, you know, Picotee. It is best that we should not."

"Perhaps it is," said Christopher, hurriedly, taking up his hat. "Let me now wish you good-bye; and, of course, you will always know where I am and how to find me."

It was a tender time. He inclined forward that Ethelberta might give him her hand, which she did; whereupon their eyes met. Mastered by an impelling instinct she had not reckoned with, Ethelberta presented her cheek. Christopher kissed it faintly. Tears were in Ethelberta's eyes now, and she was heartfull of many emotions. Placing her arm round Picotee's waist, who had never lifted her eyes from the carpet, she drew the slight girl forward, and whispered quickly to him:—"Kiss her too. She is my sister, and I am yours."

It seemed all right and natural to their respective moods and the tone of the moment that free old Wessex manners should prevail, and Christopher stooped and dropped upon Picotee's cheek likewise such a farewell kiss as he had imprinted upon Ethelberta's.

"Care for us both equally!" said Ethelberta.

"I will," said Christopher, scarcely knowing what he said.

When he had reached the door of the room, he looked back and saw the two sisters standing as he had left them, and equally tearful. Ethelberta at once said, in a last futile struggle not to let him go altogether, and with thoughts of her sister's heart:

"I think that Picotee might correspond with Faith; don't you, Mr. Julian? They know each other."

"My sister would much like to do so," said he.

"And you would like it too, would you not, Picotee?"

"Oh, yes," replied she. "And I can tell them all about you."

"Then it shall be so, if Miss Julian will." She spoke in a settled way, as if something intended had been set in train; and Christopher having promised for his sister, he went out of the house with a parting smile of misgiving.

He could scarcely believe as he walked along that those late words,
VOL. XXXII.—NO. 191.

yet hanging in his ears, had really been spoken, that still visible scene enacted. He could not even recollect for a minute or two how the final result had been produced. Did he himself first enter upon the long-loomed theme, or did she? Christopher had been so nervously alive to the urgency of setting before the hard-striving woman a clear outline of himself, his surroundings and his fears, that he fancied the main impulse to this consummation had been his, notwithstanding that a faint initiative had come from Ethelberta. All had completed itself quickly, unceremoniously, and easily. Ethelberta had let him go a second time; yet on foregoing mornings and evenings, when contemplating the necessity of some such explanation, it had seemed that nothing less than Atlantean force could overpower their mutual gravitation towards each other again.

On his reaching home Faith was not in the house, and in the restless state which demands something to talk at, the musician went off to find her, well knowing her haunt at this time of the day. He entered the spiked and gilded gateway of the Museum hard by, turned to the wing devoted to sculptures, and descended to a particular basement room, which was lined with bas-reliefs from Nineveh. The place was cool, silent, and soothing; it was empty, save of a little figure in black, that was standing with its face to the wall in an innermost nook. This spot was Faith's own temple; here, among these deserted antiques, Faith was always happy. Christopher looked on at her for some time before she noticed him, and dimly perceived how vastly differed her homely suit and unstudied contour—painfully unstudied to fastidious eyes—from Ethelberta's well-arranged draperies, even from Picotee's clever bits of ribbon, by which she made herself look pretty out of nothing at all. Yet this negligence was his sister's essence; without it she would have been a spoilt product. She had no outer world, and her rusty black was as appropriate to Faith's unseen courses as were Ethelberta's correct lights and shades to her more prominent career.

"Look, Kit," said Faith, as soon as she knew who was approaching. "This is a thing I never learnt before; this person is really Sennacherib, sitting on his throne; and these with fluted beards and hair like plough-furrows, and fingers with no bones in them, are his warriors—really carved at the time, you know. Only just think that this is not imagined of Assyria, but done in Assyrian times by Assyrian hands. Don't you feel as if you were actually in Nineveh; that as we now walk between these slabs, so walked Ninevites between them once?"

"Yes Faith, it is all over. Ethelberta and I have parted."

"Never mind. She is not good enough. And so my plan is to think of verses in the Bible about Sennacherib and his doings, which resemble these; this verse for instance I remember: 'Now in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah did Sennacherib, King of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them. And Hezekiah, King of Judah, sent to the King of Assyria to Lachish,' and so on. Well, there it actually is, you see. There's Sennacherib, and there's Lachish. Is it

not glorious to think that this is a picture done at the time of those very events?"

"Yes. We did not quarrel this time, Ethelberta and I. If I may so put it, it is worse than quarrelling. We felt it was no use going on any longer, and so—Come, Faith, hear what I say, or else tell me that you won't hear, and that I may as well save my breath!"

"Yes, I will really listen," she said, fluttering her eyelids in her concern at having been so abstracted, and excluding Sennacherib there and then from Christopher's affairs by the firm settlement of her features to a present-day aspect, and her eyes upon his face. "You said you had seen Ethelberta. Yes, and what did she say?"

"Was there ever anybody so provoking! Why, I have just told you!"

"Yes, yes; I remember now. You have parted. The subject is too large for me to know all at once what I think of it, and you must give me time, Kit. Speaking of Ethelberta reminds me of what I have done. I just looked into the Academy this morning—I thought I would surprise you by telling you about it. And what do you think I saw? Ethelberta—in the picture painted by Mr. Ladywell."

"It is never hung?" said he, feeling that they were at one as to a topic at last.

"Yes. And the subject is an Elizabethan knight parting from a lady of the same period—the words explaining the picture being,

Farewell! thou art too dear for my possessing,
And like enough thou know'st thy estimate.

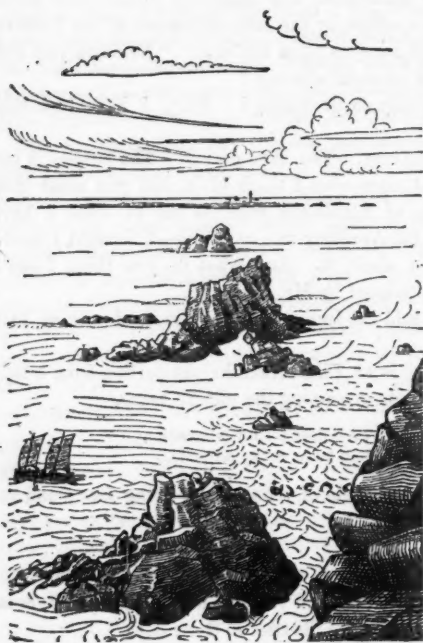
The lady is Ethelberta, to the shade of a hair—her living face; and the knight is——"

"Not Ladywell?"

"I think so; I am not sure."

"No wonder I am dismissed! And yet she hates him. Well, come along, Faith. Women allow strange liberties in these days."

At the Land's End of France.



I SUPPOSE every lover of nature—for I do not count among her lovers the multitude who scour hither and thither, and come home the richer by no clear impressions or preferences, only by an indiscriminate sense of travel, exercise, or holiday—but I suppose every real lover of nature is partial, finding himself affected by some one kind of landscape with a private intensity of enjoyment which no other kind affords him, and into which scarcely a second person can completely enter. Of my own partiality, at least, I am very sure. I have

not a word to say against other people's scenery, whether they love Alpine forests and glaciers, or great rivers flowing between the pastures and poplars of the plain, or clouds that roll their shadows all day long over rolling moorlands of the North, or summer lakes of Italy. All these are good; but give me rather a sea-coast where there are long bays and promontories, with islands, if you want to make me quite happy, broken from the mainland. The encounter of continent and ocean when it is most inveterate, the vicissitudes of their mutual advance, retreat, surrender—invading firth and sallying cape, rocks cut off by the sea, pools and estuaries locked into the land, dark slopes dividing liquid fields—all this makes up a landscape that charms and satisfies my imagination more than any other. No other is so various, no other so full of contrast, of discovery, of allurements. Such a coast at once invites you, at every cove and inlet, to quiet sojourn, and beckons you, past every

headland, to mysterious beyonds. The better you know it, the more entertainment you find in its surprises, the more poetry in its secrets. Your eye delights to linger along the profile of the land where it pushes out farthest on this hand or on that, and seems as though it would never dip into the sea-line. One day you start to follow out the exploration on foot, and then that even-seeming distance breaks up and complicates itself before you, with jutting of unsuspected nesses and disclosure of hidden havens, into a succession of many promontories instead of one. Another day you seek, and find if you are fortunate, some great inland height from whence you can look down, as it were upon the back of your hand, upon the coast line and learn all its branchings. Do you want peace?—in the recesses of the bays you shall find halcyon shelter. Do you want storm?—there is surf about the reefs and precipices of the headlands. In your walks you never know what you will come to next. You may think you have turned your back upon the sea, but it pushes round farther than you know, and as you go down through a wood the blue of it may strike suddenly up between the boughs. Or at a moment when you are wholly taken up with midland sights and fancies, with orchards, threshing-floors, or hedgerow-flowers, you may hold your breath as you become aware all at once that the sound of the trees has taken a fuller note, and changed into the sound of waves close at hand. At night, if you have climbed to some windmill or high place to take the freshness and the moonlight, a stroke of silver far off over the darkness of the country may tell you of inland waters of which you had not guessed.

We can all of us think of coasts where the interchange of sea and land has brought about conditions like these. If we want the longest mulls ridged by the loftiest mountains, divided by the deepest estuaries, and continued by the most endless islands, there is the west of Scotland. But so much vastness is not necessary to the effects I mean, and the west of Scotland is too wet, wild, and dark. Then for an opposite example there is the Mediterranean at the frontiers of France and Italy, where your sunset horizon is bounded by cape beyond purple cape of the Estrelles, and from an Alpine spur you may look down upon the daintiest of peninsulas, Monaco and Esa and Villafranca, adventuring the most capriciously into the most enchanted sea. But the Mediterranean with its enchantments is not like the ocean; and it is the ocean itself that I must have to come and go over my sands, to flood my inlets and ebb about the bases of my cliffs. If there is a coast where those pleasures of cape and bay are to be had in their perfection, it is the coast of the French Cornwall—*Cornouailles*, *Cornu Gallix*, Horn of Gaul—the most remote and least frequented part of Brittany. For though Brittany has of late years become holiday ground, and receives its contingent of tourists as regularly as Switzerland or the Rhine, still curiosity or convenience so guides the main body of these that, while they range both the northern and southern seaboard of the country, few by comparison find their way to its western extremity, to the land's end, or land's ends, for there are several of them,

with which the Armorican peninsula confronts the Atlantic. There is one point only, in all that diversified region to the South of Brest, whither people have learnt to go in any numbers, and that is the Pointe du Raz, a scene of which the guide-books have made much, so that it has become something like a resort for tourists, at least of the more enterprising class.

The nearest railway is at Quimper, the venerable capital of the district and seat of its bishopric, a pleasant river-side city of gables and fables, familiar to every one who has been in Lower Brittany at all. To see the Pointe du Raz, you must travel some thirty miles due west of Quimper, over a heathy region with the sea not far off on either hand, and take up your quarters at the little fishing town of Audierne. Like many towns on these coasts, Audierne was a great place once, but towards the end of the sixteenth century disasters came upon it, and it has gone on in a



dwindled impoverished way, from which it is only beginning to revive in consequence of the modern expansion of the sardine trade. The waters in which its boats ply are very perilous, but among the most abounding in the world, and yield, besides the staple of sardines, immense numbers of lobsters, crayfish, congers, bass, mullet, and mackerel. The town lies near the mouth of a river, and consists of a number of large stone houses scattered along a wharf under a hill; a mile of well-built jetty or sea-wall prolongs the wharf out to the river's mouth, and carries at its extremity a light-house to guide the fishermen into port. It is solemn to walk upon this sea-wall at night, and hear the boom of the iron-bound outer coasts, and watch the lanterns of a belated boat or two, and presently their

dim shapes and sails, as they make their way in past the reefs and come slipping before a breeze or groaning under oars up the channel through the dark. As for quarters, you are not too ill off at Audierne. The ways of inns in this part of Brittany are always primitive and careless enough, and their prices not so admirably low as in some places of the Léonnais, further north. But beds are clean; and here at any rate you may be at ease about your food, for your host himself dines at table in the old fashion, and carves for his guests and talks to them. He is a personage in these parts, *le père Batifoulrier*, and with his comical name and prodigious girth furnishes a kindly jest to all the country-side. He is not a native, but came from Auvergne five-and-twenty years ago, and must have shrewd stuff in him to have made his way, as strangers seldom can, among Bretons in Brittany. He was not always as heavy as he is now, and has three medals for lives he has saved in the harbour. It does you good to hear his deep slow voice among the chatter of the table, and to see the look of slow humour and kindness which plays now and again over his immense swarthy countenance. His wife, if you will let her, will pack you a great basket with bread and wine, chicken and lobster, when you start to spend the day at the Pointe du Raz.

It is a six miles' drive or walk from Audierne to the light-house which is at the summit of that famous promontory. After you get clear of the frequent hamlets, which make this desolate region seem more desolate with the sense of a population living where there are no means of life, and after you pass from among the innumerable stone walls with which they fence off fields where nothing seems to grow, you come out on a plateau with the Atlantic close beneath you on either hand. At first you are disappointed, for this is like any other heathery and stony plateau above the sea; the height, something under two hundred and fifty feet, is not so formidable, nor is there anything so very striking in the forms of some cliffs that you can see across a narrow bay on your right. It is only when you walk on past the light-house and dip towards the extremity of the point that the character of the place comes out. The plateau narrows to a ridge, and you walk no longer among stones and heather, but among jumbled masses of lichen-stained granite with a few sea-pinks and tufts of samphire. Beneath your right hand are sheer granite cliffs that become more shattered and fantastic as you advance; the path winds round the heads of chasms; you peer down sudden clefts into the darkness of which the sea drives foaming. It echoes and booms; rock and sea tear at one another, in one place the sea has pierced a passage, a mere thread wide, through the thickness of the point. But the point juts on and on, the riven granite taking wilder and wilder forms, the ridge with its chaos of its heaped rocks narrowing and narrowing, until at last you squeeze your way between two boulders, and find yourself at the end of all things. You are face to face with an immeasurable vastness. Three-quarters of the horizon is ocean. You have to turn about and look south-east to discern in that quarter the far-off line of bay that ends in the long spit of

Penmarc'h. To the north, if the day is clear, you can trace out an endless succession of headlands, beginning with the near Pointe de Van, going on with the many-branched peninsula on the hither side of Brest, then passing beyond the mouth of Brest harbour along a faint interminable line that dips once, and then appears again, fainter and further yet, where are the scarcely distinguishable islands of the archipelago of Ushant. But more than the immensity of the sea, more than the mysteriousness of those far-ranging coasts, you will be struck by what lies immediately under and before you. Here at your feet the precipice falls away and the ocean-currents sweep; the land ends here; but the battle is not over yet. From amid the waves the granite rears itself again and again. One, two, three, great fortresses of black and battered rock appear in line out to sea at intervals of half a mile or more, and between them lesser crests and ridges top the waves by a few feet only. Carry your eye along this line, and you come to a long flat island, with a light-house, lying upon the sea about five miles off, and over that, reefs again to the farthest horizon. For this chain of visible and sunken rocks, the remains of a mighty spur of mainland now engulfed, stretches out some six leagues west. The low island with the light-house is called the *Isle des Seins*, and is inhabited by a few hundred fishermen. It must be the most desolate home in the world. It is often unapproachable from the mainland for weeks together. The strip of barren soil rises little more than ten feet above the sea, and not a tree grows on it. The island has a small harbour with a jetty, in which the fishing-boats anchor, and whither English and other traders come to carry away the produce of the fisheries. By their take of lobster and crayfish the islanders make a good deal in the season, but drink all their money away, and are half starved for the rest of the year. Their only other resource is the burning of sea-weed to make soda, and what waifs and strays they gather from shipwrecks. For nothing can persuade the people of these coasts to keep their hands off flotsam and jetsam. They are not wreckers, this thriftless, sodden, banished race of the *Isle des Seins*; nay, they are daring seamen, and often heroic in saving and kind in tending the castaway; but they do not think of property as they do of life, and all merchandise that comes upon the coast they take for theirs. It is a coast of a terrible name for shipwrecks. Much has been done and is doing with light-houses, but nothing can prevent the deadly *Chaussée des Seins*, as they call the chain of reefs beyond the island, and the perilous *Bec du Raz*, which is the name of the channel between the island and the point, from devouring their yearly tale of lives. On either side of the point the waters are full of fish, so that smacks pass to and fro continually in the *Bec du Raz*; as do greater craft often, to avoid the long circuit outside the *Chaussée*. The Breton fisherman has a prayer for the passage: "Pray God help me through the *Raz*; my boat is so little and the sea so great!" And he has proverbs which say, "No man passes the *Raz* without mischance or the fear of it;" and again, "Whoso steers not wisely in the *Raz* is a dead man." The currents past

the point and among the reefs are such that it scarcely needs wild weather to bid the seaman beware. But it is in wild weather that the place is most itself and should be seen. Then the whole weight of the Atlantic comes crashing against the granite juts and buttresses; then the caves re-bellow, and the seas storm the cliffs, and dense foam drives over the plateau, and a man cannot hear himself nor stand. This I have never seen, but only how the Raz looked on a summer's day when the air was still, with a sense of distant thunder, and the quick lizards came peeping and slipping like leaves over the hot rocks about me. The Atlantic was burning blue, and very calm—but in that calm what a perfidy: the waves could not keep from booming; the tide swung against the point and between the chain of rocks with the force of a cataract, but smoothly until it met the current, when it broke into a sudden race with the crossing of a myriad shocks and the leaping of innumerable crests. Against the adverse smoothness a fishing-crew laboured with wind and oar in vain; along the thickest of the race a shoal of porpoises passed with leap and fling; cormorants with their necks out flew their straight low flights; the sea-gulls wheeled and called. Presently the swing of the tide grew slacker; there was a half hour when the sea ebbed confusedly all ways instead of one, and then the race began again, only reversed. Meanwhile something strange had happened to that forlorn island in the offing. It had disappeared, and in its place there brooded over the sea a dense white shroud, which presently came spreading thinly, and with an ashen odour, to the land. It was only the smoke of the burning sea-weed, which had been thicker than usual that afternoon, and had hung in the still air; but the sight had a thrill in it, and made one think of all the mysterious things that have been said and believed about the place.

For the Ile des Seins is a ghostly island, an island of Souls, as in truth that afternoon it looked no less. The awfulness of the coast, the peril of the seas, the weirdness of that minute inhabited desert in the midst of the seas, has possessed the imagination of the people. Between the Pointe du Raz and the Pointe de Van there is a narrow bay ending in a straight shore of sand; and behind the sand a great mere full of bulrushes in a gloomy valley. The bay is called the *Baie des Trépassés*, Dead Men's Bay, partly no doubt from the natural terror of the place, partly because to these sands is washed the drowned body of many a seaman, partly because of tales which tell how in this place, between the sea-waves and the mere, the spirits of the unburied dead assemble in the night-time, and claim with moanings a passage to their home. The belief, as it is said to exist among the people to this hour, is very like what we find recorded by Procopius thirteen hundred years ago. Hear Procopius, in Holeroft's spirited English:—"Along the ocean shore over against Brittia"—by Brittia Procopius makes it clear that he means the island of Britain, and by the parts over against it the peninsula we call Brittany—"along the ocean shore over against Brittia are many villages inhabited by fishermen, husbandmen, and boatmen, who traffique in the island. . . . They have

the employment of conducting Soules departed imposed on them by turns ; when any man's time comes, they goe home to bed towards night, expecting their fellowe conductor, and at midnight they finde the door opened, and hear a softly Voice calling them to the business ; instantly they rise, and go down to the sea-side, finding themselves constrained to goe on, but they perceive not by whom ; Boats they find ready, with no men in them, and aboard they goe and sit to their Oares. They perceive the Boats loaded with passengers even to the deck, and the place of their Oares not an inch from the water ; they see nothing, but after an hour's rowing come a land in Brittia, whereas in their own Boats they have much ado to pass over in a Day and a Night, having no Sailes but rowing only. And they instantly land their Fare, and are gone away with their Boats suddenly grown light, and swimming with the current, and having all save the Keele above water : They see no Men leaving the Boates, but they heare a Voice relating to some, who it seemes stayes there for them, the names of the Passengers, with their Titles, and additions of what Fathers they were ; and (if women) what husbands." Procopius's story thus is that the souls are ferried from Brittany to Britain, but others say, to that mysterious island nearer home. Again Claudian, in his invective against Rufinus, makes Tisiphone emerge from the mouth of hell at a place in Gaul : "there is a place where Gaul spreads forth her farthest shore—beyond it stretch the waters of the Ocean—where Ulysses is said to have drawn to him the silent host by his libation of blood : there is heard the wailing clamour of shades that flit with a thin cry." When Claudian writes thus of the mouth of hell, it seems almost as if he too had heard of such traditions as linger still about the Ile des Seins and Dead Men's Bay. Much learning has been spent, and some of it patently mis-spent, in trying to identify these places with other allusions of ancient writers. Suffice it that here, even in the stillest summer, we find a spell that works upon us strangely—how much more then upon the storm-beaten imaginations of those who live and die, with awe handed down from generation to generation, amid the sights and sounds of the place.

A still stronger experience of gloom and desolateness is in store for one at another point of the coast. If the reader will look at the little map farther back, he will see that the Bay of Audierne is terminated at the south-east by a point called Penmarc'h. Instead of the plateaux and precipices of the Pointe du Raz, the land here juts out low and very flat. But it is treacherous all the more. The whole coast is fringed with a deep border of black rocks, not lofty or threatening, but lying piled in long shelves and tables between the sand and sea—here cleft with gullies up which the waves hurry with stealth, there running out in long spits and bars over which they foam savagely, and again studding the blue for miles with detached points and fragments. One would say it was a coast impossible for seafaring. And yet on these deserted sands stood a city that was once among the richest in the Duchy. Penmarc'h in old days could equip her three thousand men-at-arms, and shelter behind her jetties her

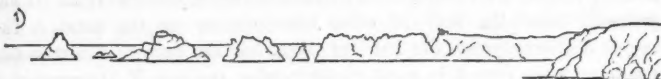
fleet of eight hundred craft. She had her Drapers' Street and her Jewellers' Street, her almost independent communal government, her burghers who used, they say, to toss their wine only from golden cups; her goodly spires and towers; her army of stoled ecclesiastics. Upon the plain where the rich city stood are now a light-house, three or four squalid fisher-hamlets of a dozen houses each, the remains of half a dozen churches, a few fragments of tower and crenelation, the gables of a few fallen houses, and many tell-tale mounds and uneven lines upon the sand. A score or so of fishing-boats hang their nets to dry in a scanty anchorage between two spits of rock. Never has been such a downfall so close within man's memory. The first blow to the prosperity of Penmarc'h was struck by the English, who descended here in 1404 under Admiral Wilford, and to whom the place, being unfortified because of its extent and the nature of the ground, yielded easy plunder. Against similar chances the citizens tried fortifying private houses and churches; nevertheless they were continually harassed by pirates. The great source of their wealth, besides a large trade with Spain, was a bank of codfish off their coast, the richest then known. Presently changes in the bars and currents took this resource away, and later the cod fisheries of Newfoundland superseded theirs. The changes of bar and current by degrees also made their anchorage more dangerous. And so the city was on the decline already, when the great blow came to it thus, at the end of the sixteenth century. The wars of the League had brought upon Brittany a more cruel anarchy than upon any other part of France. Marauding partisans fortified themselves wherever they chose, and harried the country. The most ferocious of these, the young Guy Eder of Fontenelle, came one day, from his island stronghold in a bay to the North, insinuated himself into the good graces of the Penmarc'h burghers and their wives, and then sprang upon them with his cut-throats, burned, sacked, slew, and finally trailed off to his island a booty that loaded three hundred boats. That day made an end to Penmarc'h. The best part of its surviving inhabitants scattered themselves among other better defended towns. The descendants of the remainder are the scanty fisher population whom you find to-day.

This, too, is a place where people go to see as a sight the warfare of the elements. The thunder of these reefs, the rush of the waves over these ledges, the storm of sand and spray along the plain, the mingling of earth, heaven, and ocean, are in their way not less impressive than the spectacle of the Raz. One day five years ago the sea dealt in this place a felon stroke. Two ladies and three children had come to watch a storm, and were standing in front of a cabin which a painter has built for himself just out of reach of the waves. It was no very great gale, but the painter called out to them to mind or the spray would wet them. The words were scarcely out of his mouth when from a gully in the rocks beside them a sea leapt up, and swept them in a moment to their deaths. A cross clamped into the rock marks the place. The inhabitants declare that no wave was ever known to break so far before. The husband of one of the ladies was

serving in Paris at the time ; he wrote to her as the besieged did write to their friends, by balloon, for two months afterwards, and only learnt his loss when upon the capitulation he made haste to these coasts to find her. What I witnessed at Penmarc'h was no scene of storm or peril, only the close of such another summer's day as at the Raz. The sun sank red and glorious upon a pearly sea, and facing it a broad pale silver moon rose above the misty land. From sun to moon there was drawn overhead a great arch of clouds narrowing towards either horizon—clouds—films—fleecy—how shall one call those fiery flights that span the firmament, that magic of amber flame and thin-drawn gold against the blue ? How tell of the gradation of the sky from zenith to horizon, the passage of sapphire into chrysoprase and ruby and topaz ? In the shoreward water, barred with rocks and broken into pools, the subtlety of that transition was lost, and the reflections cast up were like a dark-set mosaic of different coloured lights, pearly and rose and blue. With all that pageantry in sky and sea, what a sense of desolation, of ruinousness and death. Thin fumes of burning kelp hung over the plain, the hot air felt as if it had contagion in it. As the twilight fell, and one stumbled along the uneven bents between the great light-house and a church built almost on the sands, where fishermen give thanks for safety, the ghostliness of the place grew more and more. Flights of petrels flitted swift and shrill among the rocks ; anon a hoarser curlew whooped. On the land grew beds of the dry sea-poppy, with its twisting pods and frail yellow blossoms ; and presently came a bed of another flower and set the last seal of deathliness upon the place. On the thinnest of the sand the narcotic thorn-apple (*Datura stramonium*) put forth its long bells, pure white and fantastically five-folded, from among its thick growth of leaves and spiky seed vessels and rank stems—an ominous bloom, having, as Gerrard puts it, “a strong ponticke savour, that offendeth the head when it is smelled unto,” and growing among waste places and the haunts of human decay. Gathering a handful of these beautiful ghostly flowers in the moonlight, it felt time to hasten away under one knew not what gathering fever and oppression of the spirits.

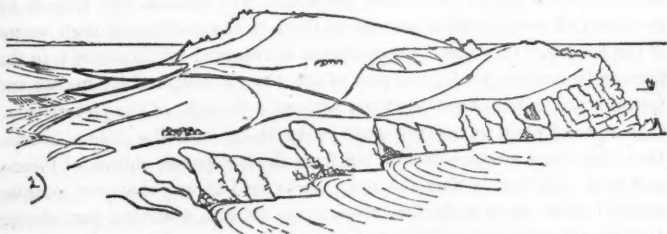
Those are only two, and two of the most frequented, scenes of their kind that are to be found upon this coast. But there is no end to them. If the reader will turn again to the little map, he will see how a long narrow ridge, the ridge of desolate moors called *les Montagnes Noires* from the clouds that often brood over them, runs out dividing the bay of Douarnenez from the estuary and roadstead of Brest, and is terminated by long tongues of land stretching north, west, and south—four main headlands, without taking account of minor indentations. If he wants to have his fill of such scenery as we have been talking of, let him take up his quarters at the fishing village of Camaret, or at the ancient little town of Crozon on the summit of the plateau. Here he will be disturbed by none but a few holiday parties from Brest, who come in the summer-time to see the caves of Morgat. But the caves of Morgat are only one of the curious sea-sights of the neighbourhood. Strike the coast where

you may, you will find new forms of jagged fantastic precipice, new alternations of cliff and cove, echoing channels of the sea beneath jutting vaults of rock, groups of sudden islands. The best way is to wander at random. The plateau which ends in all these cliffs and promontories is open and barren, not cut up with stone walls like that at the Raz. Heather and gorse, a poor inch or two high, make a faint ruddy or golden bloom over the quartz. But bleak and barren as it is, the soil, with help from the sea, contrives to support an amazing population. The Cap de la Chèvre, a cape which is named from goats and seems incapable of sustaining any other life, is sprinkled over with half a score of separate hamlets, groups of low grey gables huddling together against the wind. Round about each hamlet a few fields are cultivated for buckwheat and potatoes. On every swell of the plateau stands a rude windmill by itself; you can count a dozen at a time, and the creaking of them is the only sound that you hear mingling with the sea-gull's call. Perhaps the wildest walk in these parts is to the Pointe du Toulinguet; to the north is the fortified promontory of Quêler, commanding the entrance to Brest; all round the Cap de Chèvre the cliffs are noble; but the point I like best is where you come down to a deep cave of silver sand, the Anse de Dinant as it is called, and see the long Atlantic rollers coming in between the two headlands, of which I have tried here to show the out-



1) The Tas de Pois, looking from the Anse de Dinant

2) Southern promontory of the Anse de Dinant, looking from the same point



lines. The northern point holds sternly on at one height, its walls black, jagged, and precipitous, until at last it is cleft into a succession of separate islands, stubborn block after block, which the inhabitants call the Tas de Pois. The soil of the southern promontory, from its juncture with the mainland, rolls onward with an exquisite and flowing suavity of contour like no other of these headlands, but ends on all sides, it too, in riven precipices and sharp juts and cavities of impending cliff. Here, again, I saw the sea without its terrors. The Atlantic was as blue as the

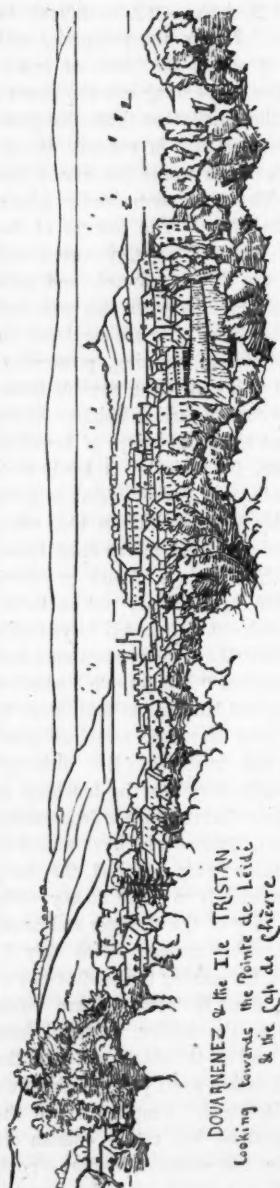
Mediterranean; the rollers scarcely heaved themselves, but came on faint and regular, to lap against the rocks and break back in a playful myriad of minute intersections and repercussions. The air was full of sunshine; a woman stood winnowing while I sketched, and the corn drifted in a golden spray to the ground. The elements played at peace, and desolation put on a mask of kindness.

But the reader has had enough of desolation, whether masked or manifest, enough of iron cliffs, and places—

Where beyond the extreme sea-wall, and between the remote sea-gates,
Waste water washes, and tall ships founder, and deep death waits.

There is monotony in this, and I began by vaunting the variety of my favourite scenery. Well, to appreciate that, there is no need to go farther than the bay enclosed between two of our promontories, the Pointe du Raz and the Cap de la Chèvre. On the shores of that lovely inland sea there is abundant choice. To explore it properly, you must make your headquarters at Douarnenez, the town which stands at its innermost south-eastern recess (the bay is about fifteen miles by ten) and from which it takes its name. It was an island close to Douarnenez, the Ile Tristan, that the brigand Fontenelle chose for his fortress, and whither he trailed his three hundred boatloads of plunder from Penmarc'h. For five years he was master of the town and island. From those five years, which saw the ruin of so many neighbouring places, the prosperity of Douarnenez seems to have begun. It has gradually taken the lead of other fishing-places on the coast. The bay of Audierne yields the heaviest takes, but can only be fished in fine weather; while except in great westerly gales, the bay of Douarnenez is one great roadstead, with a perfect anchorage, and in all weathers there is refuge in the double harbour of the port itself. The great extension of the sardine trade took place about a dozen or fifteen years ago. Large fortunes were made; the fisher population was doubled and trebled by the influx of country folks anxious to share in the profits and high wages of the fishery. (A similar circumstance is recorded of Penmarc'h in the fourteenth century.) A great part of the town is new, and the houses and factories are solidly built of stone, without a thought of the picturesque; their rows of plain square piercings make them look like child's houses. One long street streams down a hill from the old parish church of Ploaré, and from the foot of this the town parts into three, one part running straight down upon rocks that project into the bay, a smaller part sloping to some wharves and sardine factories beside an estuary on the left, the largest part to some more wharves and many more sardine factories on the right, beside a small artificial harbour built in the innermost nook of the bay. On pages 552 and 553, taken from opposite points, are two little unskilled diagrams which will serve to show the lie of the place. The view on the left hand shows the harbour in the nook, and looks over the town and island to the great cape that bars half the mouth of the bay; and that on the right shows a glimpse of the estuary, and looks along the eastern shore of the bay. "It is difficult," wrote a commissioner appointed near the end of the

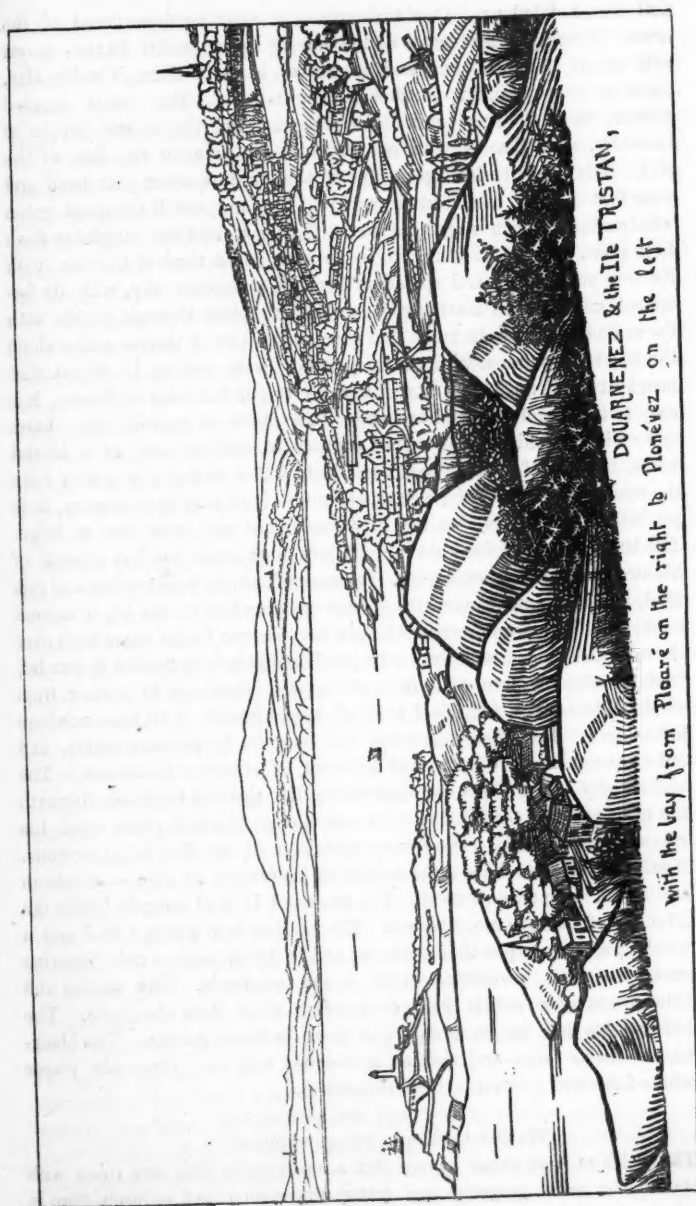
eighteenth century to report on the moral, physical, and statistical aspects of that *terra incognita*, the department of Finistère—"it is difficult to see a town more ill kept than Douarnenez, despite the prosperity and rich trade of its inhabitants. The want of police, the want of order, allows rotten sardines and decomposing brine to be flung into the street; it is impossible, even in winter, to smell fouler smells than those that greet one on approaching the town; they are insupportable, in summer, to any one not used to them from infancy." Cambry's words are hardly too strong for the Douarnenez of to-day. The population, under fifteen hundred in his time, is nearly nine thousand now. The sources of the place's prosperity show themselves in a hundred ways, innocent and offensive. All the grown men and boys are drawn seaward, and man the fleet of four hundred boats which is mustered between this port and its dependency of Tréboul. Almost all the young girls are employed in the factories, on the various processes of preparing, cleaning, preserving, and packing the fish. The patient mothers with their clean anxious faces, their heavy cloth petticoats and great white caps of various fashion—these are left alone to do the household work and mind the troupes of brawling children. One feels kindly to these women, for their lot is hard, with their menkind engaged on a precarious trade, and given to drink in good times and despondency in bad; and kindly to these children too, when they do not brawl and scream too loud, for they have merry open faces, and the tiny girls are sweet to look at with their rings of dark or yellow hair escaping from under the layers of close caps that are put on them. Girls and boys alike, the monkeys, will stretch out their hands to you with a peremptory "Donnez-moi un sou;" not that they much expect one, and will send you on your way with a cheery guttural "Bon-jour'h" whether they get it or no, and then fall chattering and laughing to each other in their own tongue, which, being beyond your learning, somehow gives you a sense of superior attainment in the creatures. But although some few of one's impressions of the people may thus be touching or bright enough, in the main one has to confess that they are a demoralised race. Husbandmen who have turned fishers, Bretons who have ceased to be primitive without becoming civilised, traders newly enriched, they have no steadfast character or traditions, and care chiefly to make money while they can. They are very ready to make a prey of the stranger and break faith with him. They are slovens and horribly unclean. Not only do strips and shavings of waste tin, punched for making the sardine-box of our breakfast-tables, glitter in great heaps about the banks—there would be small harm in that—but waste brine from the salting, waste oil from the pickling, spoiled bait from the fishing, and all the odious refuse of the factories runs decaying in the gutters, and makes some parts of the town intolerable; nor are these the worst defilements. Employers and the rich take no pains at present to mend matters, but rather cherish old habits, and look with a jealous eye on the few scores of visitors—poets and artists usually, or their friends, with a handful of bathers and a



DOUARNENEZ & the Ile TRISTAN
Looking towards the Pointe de Lézic
& the Cap de Chèvre

sprinkling of tourists on their way to the Pointe du Raz—who fill the inns at the end of summer.

But all these drawbacks will be nothing to the traveller who has once stayed long enough to become aware of the beauty of the neighbourhood, which is a continual feast. Round all the eastern and northern shores of the bay the view is bounded by long ranges of noble outline—first the hill of Saint Ronan, where that saint had his hermitage, in the midst of what was then the great forest of Nevet—and following that, the chain of moors called the Black Mountains, with the Méné-Hom for its crowning point. There is no height exceeding twelve hundred feet, but impressiveness does not depend on scale; and if this chain was loftier it would not give one the sense it does of interminable length. From the hill-ranges to the bay, the country slopes down with alternations of character the most singular. Barren moorlands, often partitioned with great banks and hedges, yet growing nothing within these divisions but gorse, fern, and heather, are terminated above the sea by black precipitous cliffs. Between these tongues of moorland come, with no violent division, valleys the greenest that you ever saw, with meadows of lush grass and galingale, and osier-beds and fields of grain and hemp, and burdened orchards, and homesteads hidden among great clumps of elms; and at the sea such valleys are terminated by level lengths of sand, in which you will find not the tenderest shell once broken. And so the whole shore of the bay is a succession of the wildest cliffs and the most perfect sands, the range of each extending generally for a mile or two at a time. In some places the richest inland verdure comes down to the very sea itself, in a way



that seems fabulous. One such place is close north-eastward of the town. Footpaths lead you down, among great moist banks grown with mossy beeches, elms, and sycamores, some of them of noble size, upon a tiny emerald meadow which is set, within great tangled hedges, upon the very rock itself. Further on, the richest jungle of brambles, sloes, hazels, and honeysuckles hangs upon the face of the cliff. You may sit with the shadow of this verdure about your head and your feet dipping into deep transparent sea, and watch the great green woodpecker go from stem to stem of the trees, and the kingfisher flash from point to point of rock. It is not easy to be tired of this sea, with its deep pure colour and splendour beneath a summer sky, with its far-spread gildings and marblings when the sun plays through clouds, with the ominous sudden darkness that comes over it when storms gather along the Black Mountains, with the busy fisher fleets putting in or out that people it in all weathers. But if any day you do feel tired of the sea, it is easy to turn landward and exchange it for sights of scarcely less charm and variety. This is not a good country to walk *through*, as a tourist walks, because of the high banks and hedges that shut out your view from the roads; but to walk *in*, as one walks who is staying in a country, it is perfect. Do not keep to the high-roads, but find your way at large. The Breton peasant does not himself love high-roads, but has a track of his own wherever he wants to go. Innumerable single tracks or lanes of this kind, sometimes up between the brooms and brambles on the top of a great bank, sometimes deep down in a hollow between two banks, sometimes over the open moor, lead secretly winding and doubling from hamlet to hamlet, from farmstead to farmstead, from one wayside sanctuary to another, from windmill to cottage, from field to wood, nay, oftenest of all from nowhere to nowhere. Not one of them but will lead you to pleasant sights, and out of one character of soil—and with soil, of climate—to another. The still marshy hollows have one atmosphere, the tinkling brooksides beneath the trees another, the bleak *landes*, and clumps of lonely pines upon the ridges, a third. There is only one unity in it all, and that is in its colour. Nowhere else have I seen the colours of landscape so rich,—so solemn and at the same time so vivid. The greens of Ireland are pale beside the intensity of these in moist places. The heather is of a larger kind and a much brighter purple than with us, and in dying takes a rich lingering russet that gives a singular beauty to the moorlands. The mosses and lichens are of a redder gold or a softer silver than elsewhere. The honeysuckle has larger flowers and more brilliant berries. The blackberries are as large and rich as mulberries with us. There are places where ferns and loosestrife become colossal,

and dank moisture feeds

The pipy hemlock to strange overgrowth.

The fields of buckwheat bloom with a creamier white, and ripen with stalks of a more gorgeous and transparent amber and crimson than in other places. The sheep ate all black, or rather of a fine velvet brown.

To this rich colouring of nature the costume of the people answers admirably. It is a picture to come, as one constantly does, upon a group of women kneeling at their washing round an open tank beneath the trees; their dresses are of various deep sound blues that only improve by washing, relieved by the white of their caps and perhaps a touch of chocolate in their aprons and of rose or yellow in their kerchieves. So, too, of the men; the peasants of these parishes wear on holidays some three or four sleeveless embroidered jackets, comically short, over their sleeved waistcoats; and for jackets and waistcoat alike they must have fine cloth from Montauban, of different shades of blue, but of no false dye or new-fangled make, or they will none of it.

It is difficult to select from among the store of pleasant images one lays up in a region like this. But if I were to choose any, I should recall, for a scene characteristic in all points of the country, one evening when the people were coming back in twos and threes over the sands from a church festival. There is a great church that stands by itself near the bay, its spire just peering over some high grassy bents that rise between the marshes and the sea—the church of St. Anne de la Palue. Hither on certain days flock all the peasantry for one of the great *pardons*—half fair half pilgrimage—of the country. I stood where a sea-side path dips from cliff to sand, with emerald meadows and sunken woodlands reaching inland on my right, an immense reach of shining sand before me, the bay upon my left. The sun sank, the distant moors began to glow; the emerald valley took a magic light and softness; as each green transparent wave came curling, a light ran along its level crest and touched the foam into a heavenly rose; the wet sand was the colour of the sky. And presently over a bare rise a long way off the pilgrim folk came dropping; and a reflection prolonged each tiny figure and group as they made their way in their quaint costumes over the broad wet sands towards where I stood—too devious a way, alas, for I could see a mile off how one and another of these devotees, the elders of their village, came reeling from their solemnity. That was one sight special and proper to Brittany. For a mighty panorama over the whole neighbourhood—indeed over half the department of Finistère—I remember a clear day on the top of the Méné-Hom. Round the eastern half of the horizon, from north to south, rolled innumerable crests and billows of moorland, some near, some faint in the extreme distance, and yielding glimpses, every now and then, of the rich country hidden in the hollows among them. The same kind of country filled the whole north, but between me and it, almost at my feet, wound two great estuaries, now losing themselves and now reappearing, the estuaries of the Aulne and the Faou, with a crowd of disused war-ships moored in a bend of one of them, and both presently opening into the great landlocked roadstead of Brest. Beyond the roadstead I could see Brest lying white along its distant steep, and all my promontories beyond Crozon, and remote islands far beyond that; and to the south-west I could look all over the bay of Douarnenez where it

lay, of an opaque grey marbled over with gold, and along its southern shores to the Pointe du Raz and the Ile des Seins, and right over that broad peninsula to a new bounding-line of gleaming sea in the remotest south. One recollection more, not, this time, of panoramic distance and openness, but of riches within a little space. The straight southern shore of the bay has fewer stretches of sand than its bending western and northern shores, but consists for the most part of moorlands of various height ending in broken rocky cliffs, with a continual fringe of the whitest foam, the froth of that pure sea-wine, playing about their base. At one point of the walk along these cliffs, I came to a steep little ravine which had its sides clothed with an almost incredible richness of the large-belled heather, and was flanked, where it opened upon the sea, with two isolated towers of ivied rock. Upon the sea just there, a flight of gulls had settled and lay flecking the azure with their white. Down the middle of the ravine, a tiny stream fell trickling and tinkling, with the sound of a clear bell, among great boulders which often quite concealed it. A little way back from the sea, sprays of bramble and trailers of ivy growing between the boulders began to conceal the stream still more; a little further back yet, a gabled shed with a rude undershot wheel had been built over it for a water-mill; and behind this, a dam had been drawn across the hollow, with a sluice to keep back the water or let it through. Mill and sluice were now disused, and the grey shed was half lost in bushes of honeysuckle and other growths; the moist hollow behind the dam, at the head of the ravine, had become a kind of forcing-ground; great dragon-flies flitted to and fro above the jungle that grew in it, flags and water-mint and loosestrife and hellebore; and on its edges, a little out of the moisture, wonderful beds of the king-fern (*Osmunda regalis*) waved higher than a man, all stately and golden in the sunlight.

But I have spoken only of the natural sights of this neighbourhood, and they are only half its charm. It abounds also in interesting works of man's hands. This is not a country where you find such obvious and impressive monuments of ancient worship as the famous single stone of Dol, or the league-long ranges of Carnac; but lesser stone monuments of the same order are plentiful on the desolate levels of the *landes*, here as in all the rest of Brittany, and are often not very easy to distinguish from the blocks which nature herself has piled and jumbled. And there are remains to be sought for of Gaulish *oppida*, and Roman camps, and feudal castles. And there are the little covered sanctuaries dedicated to some saint or other, at every spring of water; and chapels in glades of the woods; and above all those crosses, Calvaries, in grey stone, that stand wherever a few houses are clustered together, and often in lonely places where you see them by themselves against the sky. Sometimes they are rich, these shrines of wayside prayer, and have figures of all the twelve Apostles standing about the foot of the cross; more commonly the column rises from a plain base of steps, and carries only at its summit

the weather-worn images of Christ and of His mother. Both for these outdoor stone carvings, and for wooden images in the churches, there is a local style of much uncouthness, which continues still in practice and which one must not take as necessary evidence of antiquity. The churches themselves in these parts, with a few notable exceptions, belong to a belated provincial Gothic of the sixteenth or seventeenth century; they are always built on high ground, and with their steeples of open work, in which you can see the bells a-swing, form one of the most characteristic features of the country.

Then, over and above the visible works of nature and of man, every spot of soil or sea is full of legend and poetry. Wherever one has to do with Celts, that people of poets, one finds them atoning for all the disasters of their history by what has been well called a "system of imaginary revenges." One finds them inventing a heroic past that never was; consoling the failures of their destiny by beautiful fancies, and throwing a grace over their hard unhopeful lives with romantic dreams, traditions, usages. These extremities of the Breton Cornwall, above almost all other places, have been the haunt of the Celtic spirit and its poetry. I do not know how much of it still lives, either in memory or custom, among the people, whose ways are changing fast; but what has been collected in books is enough to make the whole ground alive to one. There is one great myth common to the Celtic race in many places, the myth which tells of a mighty city submerged for the wickedness of its inhabitants. In Ireland, the waters of Lough Neagh are supposed to cover the vestiges of such a city; and in Wales, the bay of Cardigan. But the myth has associated itself, in most detail and consistency, with this bay of Douarnenez. As a matter of fact, traces of Roman roads leading from inland to the bay, traces of Roman buildings on the Ile Tristan and at many points of the shore near the town of Douarnenez, point certainly to an important station which existed at this point of Gaul, and on ground upon which the sea has at least partially encroached. These remains, in the days when legends grew, must have been far more conspicuous than now. The popular imagination seems to have taken hold of them, and of the reputation of a certain Gradlon, who, as far as real history shows, seems to have had a historical existence as count over a small principality in the Black Mountains in the sixth or seventh century.* With these data, and with that national myth of a submerged city in their brains, they have fashioned a legend like this:—

Gradlon the Great was King of all Cornwall, and had his capital at Quimper. When he and his kingdom were converted by Saint Corentin,

* I waive of necessity all notice of the discussions which have raged in this matter between enquirers of different schools, for *Gradlonism* is a war-cry; but the result seems to be that the great King Gradlon of the fifth century seems to have been created by the Breton imagination out of a small Count Gradlon who lived in a later time.

he made over the city of Quimper to the government of that saint, and went to live and rule his dominions from another city by the sea. This city was called Is, and was one of the mightiest and goodliest in the world; but men lived there too riotously. It was built on low ground beside the sea; and the waters were kept out by a pair of great sluice-gates of which no man had the key—a key of pure gold—but the king only. Now King Gradlon had a daughter, the Princess Dahut, and loved her dearly. But Dahut cared neither for God nor man, and was first in all manner of riotousness; and the lovers that were brought to her nightly she was wont to murder before dawn, and send their bodies to be flung into a pit far within the country. So God was angry against Dahut and against that city. And one day King Gradlon met Saint Corentin (or as others say his disciple Saint Guennolé) in the forest of Nevet; and the saint said to him, "Beware; for the wrath of God is about to make itself felt against thee and thine." But the king took no heed. And one night after the feast was over, the foul fiend came in the guise of a lover to Dahut, and caressed her, and asked her for the golden key from about her father's neck. And Dahut went to her father where he slept, and took the key from about his neck, and gave it to her lover. And the foul fiend vanished away, and took the key, and turned it; and the sluice-gates were opened, and the waters went over the city. And King Gradlon leapt upon his horse and rode for life; and Dahut begged with a great voice that he would take her behind him. And he took her behind him; but the sea pursued them; and a voice cried, "Let go the accursed one that rides behind thee," and Dahut's arms were loosened, and she fell and was drowned, and the waters were stayed; and the place where she fell is called Poul-Dahut to this day.

Poul-Dahut is the modern Poul-*David*, the estuary that separates Douarnenez from Tréboul. And there are a thousand tales how Dahut still haunts the bay, and may be seen sitting on the rocks in the form of a siren, a presage of ill-weather; and how Gradlon's horse still ranges the country at night with tramp and neigh; and how in calm weather the fishermen look down through the blue, and see upon the sands of the bay the ruins of the wicked city—

Old palaces and towers
Quivering beneath the wave's intenser day.

Nor is that the only cycle of legends that haunts this region. The Celts of Brittany have a whole calendar of their own saints, and in places round about you shall be shown how Saint Corentin had his hermitage here, and Saint Guennolé or Saint Ronan wrought a miracle there, and so on without end. And as usual, emigrants from the island of Britain have only carried the great Arthur cycle with them to these coasts, but their descendants have identified its scenes with the places among which they themselves lived. Thus the *Ile Tristan*, anciently and properly called *Tutuarn* after a saint of that name, has got to be thought of in connection with Sir Tristram of Lyonesse. And *Plomarc'h*, which is the

name of that point of richest verdure, of woodpeckers and kingfishers by the rocks, is pointed out as the home of King Mark, the uncle of Sir Tristram and husband of Sir Tristram's mistress in the same legend; whereas in truth the whole tenor of the legend demands that Mark should have been king not of this but of our island Cornwall. Marc'h, Mark, means a horse, and it is curious to find the tale of Midas told of this King Mark of the popular imagination. He had horse's ears, and used to put all his barbers to death for fear they should tell of it. One day he suffered a friend, sworn to secrecy, to do the barber's office and live afterwards. The friend must needs go and whisper the secret to the sands of the sea. In the place where he whispered there sprang up three reeds; certain bards cut these reeds to make music with, and the secret came along the music — Plomarc'h, Plomarc'h, the King of Plomarc'h has horse's ears. Again, when clouds roll in a dark procession, as one sees them sometimes, along the ridge of the Black Mountains and over the Méné-Hom, they say it is Arthur and his knights that ride abroad, and they take it for a sign of coming war.

And so these coasts can furnish food for all kinds of tastes. For the artist, here is a landscape the richest and a population the most picturesque; for the poet and student of poetry, an atmosphere laden with romance; for the archaeologist, monuments he can hardly distinguish from those of nature, evidences of a submerged civilisation, problems in Roman political geography, problems in Christian church antiquities to his heart's content; for the historian, a past the most fascinating and the most obscure; for the student of nature, a goodly choice of rocks, plants, birds, and fishes; for the student of man, a curious spectacle of primitive customs and their decay; for the pedestrian, not indeed what he likes best, much peril to his neck, but pleasant expeditions without end; for the grumbler and lover of grievances, foul smells, foul habits, and scant courtesy. One at all events, who is a proficient in none of these things, but in his humble way an amateur in several of them by turns, can testify that to him these few miles of land's end have furnished one of the fullest and most memorable of holidays.

Sosibizka, the Bandit of Dalmatia.

THE biographer of this Illyrian Schinderhannes—who, after taking with his own hand a hundred and fifty lives, not including the victims of his various bands, lived to an honoured old age, and died the quietest of “straw-deaths”—begins with an apology for choosing such a subject, and by reminding us that many historians have blamed Sallust for transmitting to posterity the infamous name of Catiline. I will not follow his example. We have long ago nobly vindicated the dignity of meaner themes, the “right of literature to present persons of low estimation.” The career of our hero, though concluded in the latter fourth of the last century, also illustrates a phenomenal condition of society which has hardly yet passed away from the highlands of Dalmatia; and, to speak ethnologically, it is highly interesting as a comparison with the honourable confraternity of Saint Nicholas, especially the Mafia, the Camorra, the Brigantaggio, and the Malandrinaggio of more civilised lands.

But, first, a few words upon the subject of Morlachia, or rather its tenantry, the Morlaks, whom the Italians call “Morlacchi.” This race occupies, and has occupied for the last thousand years, the whole Dalmatian seaboard, to Englishmen almost a *terra incognita* at least before the last insurrection. Whilst the maritime cities may be called Italo-Venetian, this rude and rugged race of ploughmen, shepherds and plunderers, extends everywhere over the 300 miles between the frontiers of Croatia and Albania; and it monopolises the mountainous interior, from the Adriatic to the Bosnian or landward slopes of the Dinaric and other Alps, which here prolong the Apennines. To this tribe belonged the so-called “Jumpers,” that is “fugitives,” the “Uzkoks,” Italianicò “Uscocchi,” the pirate-scurge of Segna, in the Fiume, or Flanatic Gulf; and to it still belong the Crivosje, properly Kervosje, or “blood-men” (Kerv or Krv*) of Budua and the southern frontier of Adriatic Austria, who have made themselves famous, even of late, for fanaticism and furious ferocity.

The Morlaks are a people very differently and indifferently judged by strangers. Most travellers, ancient and modern, give them the worst of characters for turbulence, cruelty and treachery; whilst the Cavaliere Nicolò Battaglini thus perorates his eulogy: “E quest’ uomo, cui pochi conoscono e molti vollero descrivere, viene dallo straniero inumano e barbaro creduto.

* When written without a vowel, the “r” assumes in pronunciation the indefinite “lant”-sound, and it is articulated with a trill belonging to no other European language. I should attempt to express it by “Krrrv.”

Oh! se ai semplici suvi costumi, se alle superbe doti del cuore venisse dato un condegno tributo—ben d' altra fama godrebbe."

The tribal name is as variously derived by the several authorities. Lucius of Traù (ob. 1679), writing "De Regno Dalmatiæ et Croatiae," proposes Moro-Vlassi or Wallachs from the Black Sea, whose Scythian or Getæ accolents, in the days of Ovid, were the forefathers of the present Slavs;* the old historian also erroneously rendered the name "black Latips" (neri Latini). A well-known author (Fortis, scrip. 1772) insisted upon it being pure Illyrian, "potenti venuti dal mare;" from More (Mor), the sea, and Vlà or Vlah, pronounced Vlahk, nobility, or power, whence Vlaki, Vlahi or (Vlacchi), Wallachs, Valaques. We will prefer that of Lambert (Hist. Gén. ii. 45), who reminds us that the mediæval Greeks called Upper Wallachia, the present Moldavia, "Maurolachia" (Μαυρολαχία), or Vallachia nera, an easy corruption of which would be Morlachia and Morlaks or black Wallachs. It may be noted that modern Illyria still calls the Greek Vlah (Vlahk), in the plural Vlaši or Vlassi, and insultingly Vlassina, whilst Vlaška-viro ("Greek faith") is equivalent to *Punica fides*. Giovanni Lovrich in 1777 accepts this etymology, merely warning us that many other races, who besides the Wallachs peopled the country, assumed the same generic name; and he believes that the primary sense of Vlà (Vlahk) is buried beneath the ruins of time. In 1875 we detect it in the German Wall, as wal-nut or foreign nut, and in the Scandinavian Val, e.g. Val-land, Wales, the land of the stranger. The Bosniac Turks still know their troublesome neighbours as Karavlassi (black Wallachians). That Wallachia sent forth many a Daco-Roman tribe, we learn by the instance of Istria: here are two distinct emigrations, the more ancient called "Rumeni," commonly "Cici,"† the charcoal-burners who frequent the streets of Trieste; and the modern are colonies occupying sundry villages and, Susgnevizza and others, lying north and north-north-east of Cepich, Istria's only lake. The sole objections to this origin appear to be that

* So Sarmatian, Sirmian, Serbian, and Servian, all have the same root. The word Slav is from Slava, glory; and such variants as "Slovene" and "Slovenski" arise not from Slavo, a word, a letter, but simply from the dialectic practice of changing the first into the fourth vowel.

† In Slav Čića, in Italian Ciccio, plur. Cici. The word is popularly derived from the "ci" (tshi) sound so often recurring in the tongue (*Giornale l'Istria*, vol. i. p. 7, year 1846). Others take it from the Slav Čića, a cousin, which is frequently addressed to elder men; like "barba" in Italy and Istria, and even like "compare" throughout the Italian peninsula. The charcoal-burners consider it slighting, and prefer to call themselves "Rumeni." According to the learned Combi (*Porta Orientale*, No. ii. of 1868) there were in 1861 at least 2,200 Cici in the Val d'Arsa, not including those of Muni and Sejane towns, whilst about Lake Cepich in 1863 some 5,000 spoke Ronmansh. The celebrated linguist Professor Ascoli (p. 179, *Studi Critici*, Milano, 1861,) says "Nessun lettore che m'abbia fin qui seguito verrà più mettere in dubbio il Valachismo di codesto importante parlare Valdarsese," and he gives specimens of the Valdarsa dialect. In vol. i. page 435 of the *Archivio Glottologico Italiano* he adds, "nel parlare Veglioto (Veglià Island, in the Gulf of Fiume) è manifestissima la presenza dell'elemento Rumeno."

the Morlaks speak not Roumansch (Roumanian, Daco-Latin), but Slav ; and are a warlike, energetic, violent race, whereas the Wallachians are essentially the reverse. But the Cici, their congeners, have also almost lost the mother-tongue, and the national spirit of the Dalmatians has been rounded and raised by centuries of war and bloodshed with the Turk. Finally, those who know the Wallachians cannot for a moment doubt the derivation of the Morlaks ; and the women still wear the iron-studded leather belt and other peculiarities of toilette preserved by their eastern kinsfolk.

Lovrich, who was personally familiar with the great bandit after he became " respectable," gives the portrait of " Stanislavo Sočivizca," supported by the significant lines of Ovid :—

Vox fera, trux vultus, verissima mortis imago ;

Quamque lupi sævæ plus feritatis habet.

He figures and describes him, at the age of sixty-one, as a tall, robust and well-made man, with many years of life before him; despite his wounds and the excessive hardships inseparable from the career of a " gentleman in difficulties." His face was long and clean-shaved, except the usual drooping mustachio ; and his blue eyes were sharp and fierce. The dress is a čaka, or tall cylinder cap, of Astrachan wool ; a white shirt, full-puffed at the cuffs ; a close-fitting, flapped jacket ; a waistcoat, embroidered about the button-holes ; a sash of many folds ; uskegače, or tights, with hooks-and-eyes extending behind from ankle to mid-calf ; and the usual " opanke," or raw-hide sandals of Slavonia, whose pointed toe-tips were turned heel-wards when the avenger of blood or foray was on the path. He has a " belly-full of weapons," like the modern Arnaut ; four pistols and a khanjar, the long Turkish dagger with knuckle-bone handle, are stuck in his belt : along his thigh is slung a short, heavy, broad, and curved scimitar, with one-bar guard, and metal sheath showing the leather below ; and a long single-barrelled flint-gun is held in the redoubtable right hand, which never missed the foe, and which could drive a bullet into the opposing barrel.

This typical personage was born about 1715, at Vragnska, distant some 16 miles from Trebigne, a large town in the Ottoman Herzegovina, concerning which we have read much of late. His father " Vuk " (the Wolf) was a poor-devil peasant of the Greek rite : he and his four sons laboured on the lands belonging to certain wealthy Turks, known to history by the impracticable name of " Umetalčichi " (Khanahdân Hamet or Ahmed el-Siki ?). This race must not be confounded with our long-robed Ottoman friends further east : a Tartar strain modified and refined by centuries of mixture with Georgian, Circassian, Greek, and a dozen other higher bloods. The Turk of Bosnia and Herzegovina is simply a Scythian, a Slav, speaking no other language, preserving Illyrian names, wearing the ancient dress of the country, and in mind as well as in body a congener or rather cousin of the Morlak. Utter barbarians, far removed from the civilisation of the capital, they are still the most turbulent, fanatical and bloodthirsty of their brood, ever ready, as the affair of Podgorizza in 1874 shows, for a murder or a massacre ; and, after many a generation,

they preserve all the bitter hatred of renegades to the form of faith from which they apostatised. Hence the death of a Turk, by fair means or foul, is a "feather in the cap" of the Morlak, and the more he kills the higher is his religious merit. Even during the reign of the late Prince Danilo of "Montenaro"—which I will not call by its Venetian corruption "Montenegro"—a medal was given not for valour in the field, but for its result, bringing in a head of a Turk.

The Hamet family bullied and harried their unhappy serfs; and, with the usual Moslem inconsequence and fatalism,—which by the bye is quite as strong amongst the Slavs,—the three brothers, after raising the "Araç" (Kharaj, or poll-tax) from their various villages, to the tune of 1,800 sequins, went to lodge and sleep with the Wolf and his four cubs. At night the guests were quietly murdered and buried in a hole outside the house. The foul deed, probably looked upon as a mere matter of vengeance, brought with it no more remorse than if the victims had been bears from the mountains. The "haunting conscience" of the murderer, as we find it, for instance, in the picturesque pages of Mr. Dickens, seems mainly to arise from a lively vision of the rope. The only repentance of the homicidal Somal is a sombre regret that he has not killed a few more men; and my friend, Azrael Pasha of Damascus, would witness the torture and death of an enemy with *acre volupté*, and probably in the spirit of "vixi diem," he would remember the hour as one of the happiest in his life.

Curious to say, no suspicion at first fell upon the assassins. Sulayman Pasha, and Firdaus Passich the war-captain of Trebigne, contented themselves with killing and enslaving some fifty Christian rayahs, who would not confess to a guilt of which they were innocent; and, as is still the Ottoman practice, they compelled the hapless villagers to refund the plunder carried off by others. This happened in 1745 when Sosivizka,* now aged thirty, having tasted first blood, became even more audacious and turbulent than before, and displayed to the world his rich clothes with cynical indifference. As society began to mutter, the brothers took with them the venerable Wolf, who died on the road, and flitted to Imoski (Imoschi, the Roman Emota), nearer the triple frontier. The "strepitoso bandito"

* Every traveller offers his own scheme for Latinising the peculiarly Slav letters č, ě, ž, and ž. I will follow the majority:—

č may also be written without the acute accent. It is pronounced "ts" or "tz;" and,

Italianised, is often written with a "tz," with "zc;" or a double z, e.g. Podgorica or Podgorića, becomes Podgoritza or Podgorizza; so Sosivica becomes "Sosivizka," and Hajdući "Aiduzci," in Italian.

č is simply ch in church; it is often written ch, as Stossich for Stossiĉ.

š like the preceding is the aspirated form of the simple "s" consonant: sh in shun.

ž again is aspirated z; we ignore it in English, but the French preserve it in Jour, and it is essentially Persian, e.g. Azhdaha (آژده) the fabled dragon.

Finally, it may be noted that the vulgar of Dalmatia, speak of "Illyrico" in contradistinction to Slavo: the former is the adulterated tongue of cities, the latter the pure Slavonian of the mountains.

often renewed this manœuvre, oscillating, as need required, between the Turkish, the Venetian, and the Montenegrin dominions, and keeping his best behaviour for Austria, where, as will be seen, he peaceably spent his time-honoured old age.

At Imoski, between the Narenta River and the town of Sign, the brothers built a house and opened two richly-stocked stores. But Sosivizka belonged to no nation of shopkeepers; he scorned to be "a merchant and a man," and he persuaded a little troop of ten kinsfolk and companions to accompany him far south into Montenegro; where they distinguished themselves by massacring forty Turks during the first summer, and by attacking the vanguard of a caravan. When on the raid, one of the party lost his gun, and Sosivizka, like a captain of men, as he was, set out to take the first weapon he could annex. Suddenly he found himself in the neighbourhood of a caravan; where first two and then six Turks charged him with being what he was, an arrant "Hajduk." The word is Turkish (Haydúd), and means simply a highwayman, a fugitive from justice, generally in consequence of what the Brazilians call a "little death" (*mortezinha*), meaning some savage murder which entails the blood-feud. These knights of the road are the lineal descendants of the *Uzkoks*,* most cruel of pirates, with this difference that, whereas the "Jumpers" respected neither nation nor religion, the Morlaks murdered only Turks. "A capite bona valetudo," says Seneca, and the safety of the troop depended solely upon its Agamemnon: all dispersed when he happened to grace stake or gibbet. The number seldom exceeded thirty, who, peaceful cultivators during the season, like the Arabs of the Persian Gulf, took the field on the Festival of St. George (O. S. the Mod. Greek, April 19), hence the proverb "Juver danski, Hajduki sastanski (George's Fête, bandits meet)." So Florus tells us, "*Dalmatiæ sub silvis agunt, ideo ad latrocinia promptissimi*;" the reason being that the woods were then leafy enough for ambushades. They did not murder women and children except for the vendetta or by accident. The pathetic name *Moyanka* (My-Anne), given to a rocky defile seven miles from Sign on the Spalato road, also called *Zenski Klanaz*, or the "Woman's Pass," arose from the chance death of a bride in a skirmish of Hajduks, when the bridegroom, or, according to some, the mother, made the echoes ring with the *piagnisteo* or keening cry, "*Anka Moja, Moja Anka*" (*mia Annuccia! my Annie!*)! Hajduk is the old Turkish name for the irregular cavalryman, afterwards called a *Bashi-Bazuk* or *tête gâtée*. And it must not be supposed, that these freebooters degraded themselves by mixing with the *Lupež*, or petty thief. They were the nobility of the profession; and it is recorded that, when a judge asked a Hajduk why he robbed, the latter asked why he judged? *Kismet!* you're a judge and I'm a thief.

Sosivizka was thoroughly equal to the occasion; he diverted the attention of his eight arresters by firing a shot and calling aloud for aid. When

* From Uzići, to ascend, to issue forth.

the Turks turned in the expected direction, he gave leg-bail, and, by falling flat on the earth, he escaped the matchlock bullets that rained over head and body. He then cut down one man with his scimitar, shot a second, finishing him with his pistol, and, as his comrades came up, put the other six to ignoble flight.

Satisfied with this exploit, Sosivizka retired to Imoski, where, says the annalist, "he married a wife, and he lived tranquilly for nine years, contenting himself with killing, by way of disport, an occasional Turk." But one of his brothers would not keep quiet; and amongst his Hajdući companions was a certain Pezčirep, whose main diversion was to spit and broil Turks alive: he at last fell into Moslem hands, and was duly seated upon the stake where he lived three days, hurting the feelings of his tormentors by jeering and smoking his pipe. Unhappily, the brother had contracted with a Greek fellow-religionist the peculiar tie called "pobratimstvo," half-brotherhood, or literally, "at-brotherhood." This Morlak custom which is the *Munh-bolá-bháí* (mouth-called-brother), of Hindostan, and the *fratelli giurati* of Italy, belongs to that stage of society, Syrian for instance, in which a man depends for the protection of his life and property solely upon kith and kin. It was a religious rite; the two stood before the altar, whilst mass was being recited, with lighted tapers, which afterwards became the priest's perquisite; they were bound to die in each other's defence, and the deepest infamy was the award of perjury. The women also had posestrimo ("at-sisters"), or semi-sorelle; and the tie was recognised, as in India, between the sexes, until the calogeri (*καλογέροι*) or ecclesiastics, who, sometimes pure themselves always suspect impurity in others, thought proper to abolish it. It was a general custom, not confined to the Latin Church. Our *Graculus esuriens*, also a Morlak and an Ottoman subject, at once betrayed his half-brother for a consideration to the Turks of Travnik, who put him to death after eight days of indescribable tortures. Sosivizka at once set out to investigate the affair, and he seems to have acted throughout like a simpleton, without any of the judgment and acumen which usually marked his movements. He allowed the traitor's father to throw the blame upon others. He permitted the traitor himself to set out for Duvno, distant some twelve miles, under pretence of fetching a lamb from a distant fold. And when the Greek did not return, he went quietly to sleep with the family, not even noticing that the fire had been put out, and that his arms had been removed.

But a Certain Personage is said to take care of his own. The bandit woke up with a start, and, striking a light, missed his weapons. As he demanded them with a furious voice, an old hag said gruffly to him, "Silence, fellow, and don't awake the family!" But he was now on the alert; the old man when asked for the arms pretended to know nothing about them, and Sosivizka at once killed him with his own hatchet. The hag handed him what he required, and he left the house to watch the result. Shortly after, the trampling of horses was heard, and a party of Turks rode up only to find the bird flown.

Our Hajduk returned to Imoski, resolved upon a terrible "vendetta" for the double treachery. This fury for revenge exists in what we may call the Bedawi and the semi-Bedawi stages of society, from the "Red Indian" to the Corsican. It is a religious duty. The ghost of the murdered man cannot rest; he haunts the family; even the screech owl and the cuckoo are the voices calling for vengeance. The Albanian or Montenenerin mother will still hang up the blood-stained paternal shirt, and show it to her sons till they take the murderer's life. Hence we shall see that a brother, not a friend, is compelled to behead his wounded brother who ran the risk of falling into Ottoman hands, and when a criminal was shot a multitude took part in the execution. If blood-money (*patiti Krvarinu*) was accepted, a long ceremony took place. On a fixed day the manslayer, wearing the fatal weapon round his neck, crawled up to the head of the assembled family, and implored his pardon. The latter, taking the arm, cried in a loud and terrible voice, "Brethren! here is the slayer of our kinsman, will ye that I put him to death?" The reply was, "Pardon him, in the name of God!" The homicide then kissed the feet, the knees, the hands, and finally the lips, of the "Domachin" (house-master); and thus peace was made. Then all sat down to a copious feast, paid for by the murderer, in addition to the 50-60 sequins of "blood-money." Yet the national saying was, and still is, "Onse ne osveti, onse ne posveti"—*Qui non vindicat, non sanctificatur*. The universal practice is a curious comment upon the theory of Christianity.

In due time Sosivizka marched with a troop of seven men; set fire to the straw-hovel during the night, and burned to death seventeen of the family who happened to have had a general merry-making; one unfortunate woman, carrying her baby, rushed through the flames to the door, and both fell riddled with matchlock balls. The Ottoman authorities thereupon complained to the Venetian "general" of Dalmatia; and the latter obliged them by ordering the punishment of the accomplices. Sosivizka's house was razed to the ground, and a price (*taglia*) of twenty sequins was placed on his head, or double the sum if he were taken alive. On August 15, 1754, the outlaw, happening to be at the fair of Sign, famous even now for its jousting and other remnants of the olden time, saw a troop of mounted Croats taking, by way of precaution, an unusual road, and at once "smelt a rat." He hurried over the wildest and roughest country to Imoski, carried off his family and his goods; and when the soldiers arrived, they found nothing awaiting them but the four walls.

Sosivizka retired to Austrian Carlovatz, near the Zermagna river north-west of Knin; "a place," says his biographer, "scantly adapted for one whose maxim was to slay Turks." Here he lived nearly three years, with his family, now consisting of wife, "pigeon's pair," and two surviving brothers; if not troubled, he might have kept the peace for the rest of his natural life. "Mount your best mare, and the Turk will catch you on a lame ass," say the Bedawin, and this sleuth-hound quality is one of the strong points of the race. The Faithful paid largely, and

secured the three brethren by treachery, which was again fatal to the traitor. A hundred armed men led the prisoners from Cuc beyond Udbina, near the triple frontier, to Kukavica, the same Pasha of Travnik who had slain the fourth. The usual alternative, the stake or el-Islam, was offered, and Christian Sosivizka became Mohammedan "Ibrahim;" whilst one of the brethren was honoured with the title of Agha. But the new dignitary took the first opportunity of levanting with another brother; and he of the three tails, sorely vexed, loaded his remaining prisoner with chains.

Sosivizka, finding the lion's force of little avail, proceeded to enact the fox. He "got religion," he became a penitent, docile, and zealous Moslem; and, after the change had been noticed, he took the opportunity of saying to his guards, "I deserve this punishment for my crimes, and can hardly regret it; but what weighs upon my heart is the money buried in the hills, and lent to my friends. If the Pasha would recover it, I am ready; but I must go myself, for no one else knows where it is, and of course the debtors will deny the debt." He counted upon awaking Turkish greed, which is ever blind, and he succeeded, after a fashion, with perhaps more of loss than of gain.

The Pasha sent the Hajduk under charge of an effendi and ten men, who were ordered to keep guard, with lighted matches, night and day. For a month they were arrantly deceived by their own cupidity; but as all the attempts at digging and debt-claiming proved mere pretences, they revenged themselves by enticing to Sign, from the county of Zara, their prisoner's wife and family, a boy and girl, who were at once put under arrest. Whilst the mother and daughter bent over the effendi's hand, Sosivizka suffered in silence, but when the son was ordered to follow suit, he roared out in a rage, "Get out of that, don't kiss the dog's hand!" and the Turks almost begged his pardon, Turkishly declaring the ceremony to be a mere custom.

On the 26th of an icy November in 1758 the effendi determined upon returning with his precious charge to Travnik. The bandit was escorted out of his house; and, as one of the soldiers drew near to conduct him, he struck out with the chain and cried, "Passia-dushka (dog-soul)! dost thou think me a woman to be handed about?" The whole family was placed on horseback, surrounded by the Turks, and for greater security by forty Austrian Pandûrs or Bandûrs, urban soldiery or *maréchaussée*. The good people of Sign pitied their sad condition, and the sufferings of the innocent for the guilty; and the most charitable contributed certain moneys which were not spent for the purpose intended.

Sosivizka laid out the alms in plying his escort with rakia—the raki (arrack) of the nearer East, grape-brandy flavoured with aniseed; and all pronounced him a "jolly good fellow" and pledged him in so many toasts ("brindisi") that their heads began to whirl. They passed out of the Venetian dominions above Brilibrigh, at the foot of the Dinarian Alps: where the Hajduk, complaining of excessive cold, begged for more cloth-

ing: when a kabanica, or hooded cloak of felt, was thrown over his shoulders, he contrived unseen to cut the rope which bound him to the saddle. Reaching the Turkish post, called the Torre di Prologh, not far from Brilibrigh, some wished to halt, as it was twenty-four o'clock (6 P.M.); but the majority insisted, like asses returning to the stable, upon proceeding straight homewards. They had hardly marched two musket-shots, when Sosivizka felled the nearest guard with his manacles, and, throwing himself from his horse, slid down the frozen side of a ravine, and crouched behind a tree-trunk. The Turks judged that he would continue his flight, and hoping every moment to hear the clanking of chains, far overshot the mark.

Meanwhile night set in, and Sosivizka used the darkness to journey past Torre di Prologh once more into Venetian territory. The snow nearly blinded him; the Bora, a furious north-easter, deafened him; and troops of wolves howling with the cold, surrounded him. His bilboes prevented him from climbing a tree, and he prepared to use them as weapons; "but," says the moralising biographer, "un lupo non mangia mai dell' altro." He persevered, and presently found himself in a place of safety.

The Turks, after a long and useless search, hung their heads in shame, and returned to Travnik with the three remaining captives. The mother stoutly refused to be converted; but the children were more amenable to reason, and the daughter passed into the harem of the Pasha Kukavića, who declared that "such fine blood should not be for a dish for Morlaks." The obstinate and vindictive dignitary, determining to secure the bold outlaw alive or dead, sent messengers with peremptory letters demanding him from the Venetian General of Dalmatia, and obtained for only answer, that the Turks should not have been such fools as to let their prisoner escape.

The Morlaks, hearing of the adventure, at once composed a "canzone" in honour of the bandit; and there is no doubt that had he lived in earlier ages his fame would have equalled that of the national hero, the King Arthur, Marco Kraglievich, whose name is in every mouth. It is preserved in the "Canzoni Eroidiche Nazionali," a volume first printed by Father Káció Miossić (Cadeich Miossich), and the frequent reprints have kept it from oblivion. Some of the verses have a charming sound, whilst they look utterly barbarous in their Latin dress. For instance (Pismo od Rados.):

Ustaniše Kragliu Radoslave *
Zloga legga, i zorizcu zaspā
Odbikete Lika i Karbāva
Ravni Kotar do bode Cettina.

* The orthography is that of Fortes and Lovrich, old-fashioned. Rodoslavo, from the old race-root Slava (glory, fame, honour), means one who "works for glory;" Stanislavo (Stanislaus) one who "stands for fame," and Vladislavo, one who "rules (vladika) for honour."

Anglicè

King Radoslavo, rise up and away !
 Thy couch is fatal, and late the day;
 In Karháva and Lika the rebels rave
 O'er the Kotar plains to the Cettina's wave.

So in the Pismo, or Song of Radoslavo :—

Dozivliegla Vila Posestrima
 S' velebite vissoce Planine
 Zloga siu Kraglin Radoslave
 Eto nate dvanajest delja.

But his Fairy "half-sister" in sorrow cried,
 O the Bibbian Alp from the rugged side:
 King Radoslavo, why sitt'st thou here,
 When a dozen Dellis are hastening near?*

Again, there is a something of Eastern wildness in the following :

Jasce kogna Marco Kraglievichiu :
 S' jednom smiom kogna zauzdaie,
 A drugamu za kanchiu slusci.

Or

Marco the prince pricks forth his steed ;
 In one hand a snake serves the bridle's need,
 And the other hand grasps the whip.†

And what can be prettier than this chorus, inviting the Morlak girls to come out and dance the "Circle" ?

Odi u kolo, duško moja !
 There to the ring, thou soul of mine !

The "rude Morlachian boor," whose muse is a vila or fairy, never studies poetry, and cannot even read and write ; yet the people compose verses which never lack a syllable, and these fly through the mouths of men, sung to every gusla (guitar) ‡ without losing a word. Unfortunately, the Song of Sosivizka has never been published.

Our Gasperoni applied repeatedly to the Pasha of Travnik for the release of his family ; but he found the Turk a deaf adder, and finally addressed a letter to him in these words : "I have heard, O Pasha of Bosina ! that thou deplorest my escape. I ask thee how in my case

* The Vila is here a supernatural being who has contracted the Posestrim tie with the ill-fated king : the Italians translate "Vellebit (not Vellebitch, as Mr. Paton has it) by Alpe Bebie : the Planina is a mountain plateau ; and Delja, a champion or hero, is from the Turkish Dilli, a madman, desperado, hence Byron makes the Ottoman lead—"His turbaned Dellis in the field."

† Lovrich (p. 131) translates this line carelessly, "L'altra di spron gli serve." I am unwilling to teach Illyrian to an Illyrian, but Kanchi is simply a corruption of the Turkish Kamchi, a whip, a switch. Moreover, the hand-maiden "Phil," my Illyrian "Shaykhah" inverts the second two words to "Kraglievichiu Marco."

‡ Made familiar by "La Guzla"—Prosper Mérimée's so-called Servian and Illyrian Songs : then by the "Théâtre de Clara Gazul"—anagram of Guzla.

thou wouldest have acted? Remain bound like the vilest of beasts, and suffer thyself voluntarily to be led before men who, in all probability, would have given thee that death which Nature prompts all men to avoid? And what have I done beyond obeying the general law (of self-preservation)? But say, O Pasha! what crimes have been committed by my wife and children, that thou thus keepest them captives by thy side? Thinkest thou to make me more docile by means like these? Thou erreest! Thou makest me only fiercer. But hear me: continue to vent thy useless rage upon my family, and I will let loose my wrath against thy Turks, and work them the direst ills. Ah! restore to me, I pray thee, my blood; forget past injuries, and obtain my pardon from the sovereign. I will leave thy subjects in peace: I will even defend them from the dangers of the road. But if thou refuse my petition, expect everything that can come from human despair. I will collect companions; I will cut off thy merchandise, I will spoil thy traders; and I vow the most solemn of vows to God in heaven from this moment, if thou disregard my prayer, to massacre every Turk who shall fall into my hands!"

This is hardly the style of correspondence which sounds grateful to official ears; and Pasha Kukavica, naturally enough, repaid the insult by ignoring it. Thereupon Sosivizka proved himself as good as his word. He collected twenty men, and marched towards Serraglio, many days beyond the territory of Venice, for he was careful not to play tricks within the "*Serenissima Repubblica*." The party fell upon a caravan of a hundred horses, guarded by seventy men, who incontinently fled, leaving one dead, a Jew who preferred losing his life to parting with his ducats. As Arambassà, or captain of the country, a title abolished only when the Austrian Constitution was proclaimed, Schinderhannes carried off the lion's share. The Turks who, "like the dogs of Morlachia," are brave only at home, sought him diligently. "It was *Sosivizka* in the mountains, *Sosivizka* in the valleys, *Sosivizka* on the plains, *Sosivizka* in the forests;" but Sosivizka, who knew a few words of Turkish, and who had donned the turban, was quietly indulging himself with food and drink in the market-place of Serraglio, where no one suspected him of daring certain death.

After a few days the bandit and his troop retired to the Greek convent of Dragovich, seven miles south of the Cettina Sources and north-east of Knin. Here he entrusted his booty to the Caloger Genadia, a good monk, who, though a strict abstainer from flesh-meat, and condemned to a diet of "dairy" and to the succulent trout of the neighbouring river, yet had no remorse in harbouring robbers and murderers; and thus the convent became a sanctuary and something worse. The Morlaks deride their regulars for eating eggs whilst they refuse a fowl; declaring the former to be merely poultry in grain. And of their Latin rivals, they sing—

I Latini saran tutti dannati,
Per aver rane e bovoli mangiati.

i.e.—Damned are all the Latins, for eating frogs and toads.

From this den of thieves Sosivizka, who often spread the report of his own death, so harassed his enemies, never hesitating to attack two, three, and even four men, that the lieges reproached the Pasha, saying: "Dost thou wish to see the Moslems' faith extinct?" But that dignitary, slow and persevering as a Chinese, contented himself with placing a higher price on the outlaw's head. The next adventure which made a name was an encounter with one Acia (Haji ?) Smaich, a braggart, who boasted everywhere that the Kafir refused to fight him. But, in 1770, Sosivizka, "who would have given a kingdom for the opportunity," accompanied by only six men, fell in with the fire-eater and his brother, at Ticevo, in the Turkish dominions. "Acia Smaich" fired his matchlock; the ball struck the Hajduk full, they say, on the brow, and only cut the skin. "It was my fortune," afterwards remarked Sosivizka, a born fatalist like all his fellows, "to raise my head at that moment, in order to observe the enemy." He replied by one ball, which went straight into his opponent's barrel—a prodigy of marksmanship often recounted in such duels between Christians and Turks,—and by a second, which passed through the foeman's skull. Seeing their man of valour on the ground, his companions fled; but not fast enough to prevent five of them from biting the dust.

This "geste" gained the honour of a second "heroic song;" and Sosivizka, whose name was now used, like Richard of England's, to frighten naughty Saracen children, dispersed his band, rightly judging that the enemy would pay less attention to an individual. About two months afterwards he collected a fresh party, and marched towards one of the largest Ottoman towns, Mostar, the "old bridge," so called after its Roman work: it has lately appeared in the "Illustrated." Here, from his lair under a tree, he espied two Turks walking along the road. His companions prepared to attack them in force; but he disdained the cowardly action, saying, "I'm enough!" As he approached them, staring at the ground, they asked him what he was looking for. He replied, "This is the place where that scoundrel Sosivizka carried off my horse, and I'm trying to track it!" The artless Faithful joined in the search, till one of them was pistoled, and the other cut down; both being so quickly despatched that their hands could not find their arms.

A few days after this trifle (*fattarello*), Sosivizka, whose head seems to have been turned by the "heroic songs," and possibly by separation from his family, committed a most atrocious act, which brought its own penalty. With twenty-five men he attacked a large caravan carrying to Turkey the "Viselini" (*Vižlini*) of Ragusa: these obsolete coins, then made at the "Slave Athens," have won the opprobrious name of "puppy dogs,"* because they passed for a silver ducat, and more, of Venice, when they were not worth a quarter; needless to say, they were highly valued by their Christian manufacturers and exporters. Seventeen Turks were slain in the *mêlée*, and three were taken prisoners. Sosivizka trussed two

* Probably from "vižle," a watch-dog.

of the wretches on spits, in the nearest wood, whilst he made the third turn and baste them before the fire. When they were thoroughly "done," he cut off the heads, and sent them by the survivor to Travnik, adding the threat, that he would serve the same measure to all future captives, and concluding with, "Oh! how great would be my joy, if I could only impale and roast the Pasha himself!" The troop wished to kill the turnspit, but their Arambassà swore that he should be left alive to tell the horrid tale.

The rumour spread like wildfire, and, in two hours, a *levée en masse* of Ottomans, on horse and on foot, fell upon the bandits, who had not left the wood, and wounded six, one of whom was beheaded by his own brother, to save him [from the infamy of the stake, and to obviate all possibility of a blood-feud. The pursuit ceased only at Metcovich, in the district of Primorje, the old Parathalassia, Pagania, or Maronia, the maritime tract between Spalato and the Narenta River.

This disgraceful flight separated the *Roi de la montagne* and his subjects. The former was compelled by the rancorous search of the blood-hounds to pass months of fear, and hunger, and solitude in the caves of the wildest ranges, and his only *pass-temps* was, now and then, to "bag a pair of Turks." Meanwhile, Pasha Kukavica, of Travnik, who had given dissatisfaction to his government, when proposing to pay his men by sacking his capital, was recalled to Constantinople, and duly decapitated. He had a beautiful wife, whom he dearly loved, and, foreseeing his fate, he is said to have divorced and married her to a friend, on condition that the child about to be born should bear its father's name.

Sosivizka tried the temper of the new Pasha, but, finding him as bad as his old foe, he presently determined upon the following "game of head" (*giuoco di testa*). Early in 1772 he sent one of his gang, in the disguise of a Calaici, or silk-pedlar (Kalaiji),* into Travnik, while he himself, with four others, lay two or three miles outside. By some mischance he was found alone by a triad of Turks, who charged him with being a Hajduk; he denied the soft impeachment, and declared himself a poor traveller wending his way to Prusatz town. "Then we'll go together!" said the suspicious and obstinate Moslems. The bandit waited till they dismounted; he then struck off a couple of maggoty heads with his scimitar, led the third—who trembled like a sparrow fascinated by a hawk—under the nearest tree-clump, learned from him all that his enemies were doing, and killed him in the coolest blood. Moreover, not content with this murder, he hacked the victim to pieces, and, in a paroxysm of fury and frenzy, tore the flesh with his teeth like a wild dog. He must have been a caution to his comrades when they rejoined him!

* The word has fearfully and wonderfully changed sense *en route* from Arabia to Dalmatia. The Illyrian Kalaj (pronounce Kalai) is the Turkish Kalái قلاى, and Kalaiji—in Illyrian, Kalajdžija—is properly a tinner of copper vessels.

A few minutes afterwards Sosivizka, with transports of joy, received his wife and son in his arms. The sham silk-pedlar had succeeded. The mother had the courage to escape by night, despite the ghosts which people the Morlachian brain; her daughter had refused to leave the harem, now her home, and it is to her credit that she did not denounce her parent. The double evasion was not detected till the next morning, when the fugitives were well on their way to the usual asylum, Dragovich. The boy was placed with a citizen, to learn reading and writing—we will score a good mark to his father. The Turks thereupon wrote urgent letters, demanding the capture or death of the robber, to the government general of Dalmatia, and obtained for all answer a determined "*Non possumus*." It was by no means easy to catch a man who, despite the Turkish rounds and patrols, would travel hundreds of miles in a fortnight; killing an enemy one day and, during the dark hours, covering fifteen to sixteen leagues. In fact, he came to be looked upon as a "bogie," or evil spirit, and some declared there was no Sosivizka.

This was not the case with a certain heroic "Curbek," who spoke of the great Bandit as a beggarly Slav. "Puoffurbaeco!" exclaims the biographer; "this insult put Sosivizka in a pretty temper." Shortly afterwards the two met: their shock was fierce; but the Moslem lost four of his twenty men; he was wounded, and he saw the rest of his suite take to headlong flight, whilst only two of the Christians were hurt. Nevertheless, a certain Vilembegh (Wali Bey) addressed a letter to the Hajduk in these terms: "Thou, who vauntest thyself the scourge of Turks, if thou be not a woman, accept my *cartel*, and meet me, either singly or with equal numbers, as may please thee!"

Sosivizka, on reading this rhodomontade, at once collected a dozen men; but he was too prudent to risk another ambush, and the boastful Mohammedan went about, proud as a peacock (pavoneggiando), swearing that the appointment was not kept. But he had soon to eat his words: his forty men, who presently surrounded the little band, were deceived by fur caps hung to the trees; and, after losing eight lives, they broke, declaring the enemy to be wizards (*istregoni*). Doughty Vilembegh, the champion of el-Islam, saved himself only by a cowardly flight to the territory of Venice.

Even the Turks could not withhold their admiration of such a feat; and a Moslem girl, who heard everywhere the name of Sosivizka, proposed herself as "half-sister" of one whom her feminine instinct guessed to be stalwart in love as he was valiant in war. She sent him a richly-embroidered marama (the Arab. mahramah or napkin), with twelve sequins,—this earnest of her friendship was afterwards stolen by a mean nephew of the magnanimous robber. But he was not always so fortunate, and he soon found reason to forswear brotherhood with Moslems as well as with Greeks. He had a Turkish "pobratim," probably a tailor, from whom he ordered a dozen hooded cloaks (*kabanice*), settling where and when they were to be delivered. The secret leaked out, and the Chris-

tians found themselves in presence of a multitude of infidel dogs. The proletariat advised a retreat, but their Arambassà spoke thus: "If we take to flight, we shall be followed, and the result is doubtful; let us rather conceal our weakness by our courage, and let us go forth to meet the hounds with a discharge of musketry as if we were the vanguard of a large party." The band obeyed, took shelter, and, suddenly starting up, killed eight at the first fire; most of the enemy ran away, but a few of the bravest made a resolute stand, which was well nigh fatal to Sosivizka. One of the horsemen pressed him so hard that he was upon the point of falling under the scimitar, when a shot from his brother stretched the Turk upon mother-earth.

Sosivizka, after an escape so narrow, retired into Venetian territory, and lay *perdu* for some time, never appearing in public except to send a couple of the circumcised to kingdom come. The terrible plague of Sign in 1768 had been fatal to the bravest of his comrades, and not a few had been captured and slain by the enemy; so he retired into Austrian ground about the Zermagna river. His place as Arambassà was taken by a certain Zuanne (John) Bussich, called Rufus (Rosso), who till 1776 commanded some twenty men. Being a Latin, he was equally troublesome to the Turks. Presently he was deserted by his Hajduks, but in 1777 he collected another band; so true it is that all this outlawry depends only upon the fame and activity of the "caput."

Sosivizka had entrusted his plunder to various friends, who traded with it in the county of Zara; and he often crossed over to Ostrovica, relying upon the Montenerin peasantry, the colonists of that region, and other parts of Dalmatia. Thereupon Stefano Nakich, Colonel of the Knin territory, resolved to take him alive, and sent fifty Pandúrs, under an Arambassà named Seravica. They found the great Hajduk playing at bowls with a friend, "unco fou" as himself. The comrade was killed by the first fire; Schinderhannes, when climbing to a ruined tower perched upon a high rock, was shot through the thigh, and he would infallibly have been captured, had not some drunken haymakers fallen upon and dispersed the soldiers with wooden forks.

The tide of success now seemed to turn against our hero, and his hard life was making him prematurely old. He managed to secure a horse, passed a few days with a "pious priest," doubtless rigid in his devotions, and then retired for a month of cure to a most gloomy and dreadful cavern near the Cettina sources.* Here he lived like the sick lion in its den, visited by all the wild beasts, that is to say the robbers and assassins, of the neighbourhood. He then collected a dozen Hajduks, amongst whom were two kinsmen; and the first captive was a Turk who had aided in the escape of his brother. The troop wished to slay him, but whilst Sosivizka was at his prayers—an exercise which he never omitted before meat, like the good brigand that he was—the brother allowed his saviour

* Described by Fortes (ii. 85), and by Lovrich (pp. 9-13). It appears to me a "humbug"—only 180 paces long.

to escape, and pistoled a nephew, who, losing temper, struck him on the cheek. Thereupon the Hajduk kicked his brother out of the band, buried his nephew, and, disgusted with the affair, retired without followers towards his favourite Zermagna.

At this place he proposed to end his days in "holy peace," but the old Adam was again too strong. About the end of June 1769, he found himself at the head of eight followers, who wanted nothing but gunpowder. One of the number was sent to buy ammunition in the nearest town, and the rest lay down for a quiet *siesta* under a wood at the foot of Mount Prologh, in the Venetian territory. But a shepherd, who had been compelled to kill and roast one of his wethers, ran off to warn some forty Turkish soldiery who were collecting the taxes, and these Bashi-Buzuks, all reckless of the *jus gentium*, galloped across the frontier and attacked the bandits in their lair, easily killed three of them, not including the traitorous shepherd, and compelled the other five to disperse and fly. Great at this strait was the valour of a certain Stojan Xexegel,* who, after tree'ing himself, killed a Turk and wounded four, when his ammunition was exhausted, and he followed his foes to the *numero de' più*. Sosivizka once more showed the remarkable *sangfroid* and "wide-awakeness" which distinguished him: he rushed towards the place where the firing was thickest, and escaped under cover of the smoke.

His next move was also a failure. The Ottomans gave out that they were about to march upon Montenero, where a certain Stefano Piccolo—"Stephen the Little"—had proclaimed himself Prince; and the Christians, fearing that the Infidels would once more treacherously occupy the Cettina country, marched all the territorial officers and troops of Sebenico to the frontier of Sign. This seemed a good opportunity for revenging the deaths of comrades who were dear to him; but the Hajduk had the displeasure of seeing his enemies turn directly towards Montenero. He then joined a band commanded by a certain Filippo Peovich, who afterwards adorned a gibbet at Zara. But fortune no longer smiled upon him, and he had serious thoughts of changing rôle, and becoming a government *employé*.

The next "disgusto" of the robber were two robberies practised upon himself. He had entrusted a sum of 500 sequins and a quantity of plunder to a certain caloger, his companion, who, foreseeing that his penitent was about to become an honest man, incontinently ran away with the spoils; and was pursued, to no purpose, by Sosivizka as far as the Danube. In the summer of 1776 a nephew from Imoski called upon him, and, during his absence, cleared out the house, carrying off a value of eighty sequins, including the "marama" of the Turkish "half-sister." The Bandit's biographer relates his pathetic complaint about these "cruel depredations" in the following words: "Is it just and right that two

* In this day we should write it "Žeželj," and the French, "Jejeli;" it means a sheep-dog's stick-tether. The Italian "gl" is used for the liquid "lj," sounded "ll."

petty larceners should walk off in complete safety with the booty which I took by force at the imminent risk of my life? Had they robbed me with arms in their hands, I should not have grieved. This would have been only tit-for-tat (*la pariglia*). But thus to plunder upon the strength of a good character, is the vilest thing in the world—we never can know what it is to trust a man!

This seems, however, to be the rule; as the miner who digs the gold has the least of it, so the thief is robbed by the receiver or the purloiner of stolen goods: it is, in fact, property *versus* labour, publisher *versus* author. Sosivizka, at the end of his career, after plundering caravans and butchering Turks, remained with only twenty sequins, the poor remnant of a poor six hundred. But he had generally spared the blood of Christians. On one occasion, when going his rounds with twenty-five companions, he met two Morlaks, whom he supposed to be spies; but, after examination, he found that they were carrying a large sum of money belonging to a merchant who had befriended him. He reproached them bitterly with their imprudence, fed them, and sent them away with an escort of his banditti, warning them that another time they might not fall into the hands of a Sosivizka. "This act," says his biographer, "shows not only a grateful heart; it also proves that the highwayman did not lean so much to filthy lucre as to the fame of valour (*bravura*)."

Moreover, the bad deeds of Sosivizka had borne good fruit; in this world men often *do* gather grapes of thorns and figs of thistles. The Turks, who had rendered themselves intolerable by their contemptuous insults and their violence, began to respect their Morlak neighbours. Some such considerations must have had due weight with the Austrian authorities, when they obtained the sovereign clemency for the Hajduk, caused him to be made a captain of Pandúrs, with an annual pay of twenty-eight sequins, and granted him a small farm. His I. M. Josef I., of Austria, in May 1776, whilst on a visit to the triple frontier, passed through Grazate, where the ex-Hajduk lived; asked him to relate his career, and graciously gave him a handful of sequins.

Shakspeare's "Macbeth," and another.

LET us not be persuaded by the theatrical cant of the day that characters are created by the actor, not by the dramatist. Neither Kean, nor Macready, nor even Garrick himself, created Macbeth, but Shakspeare only. To whom we owe that other warrior, who before his first great crime was simple and honest, and after it was still brave and dignified, I cannot tell. Only it is clear to me that there are two Macbeths—one of Shakspeare, and another dear to the dramatic critic. Let us attend to the former.

What was Macbeth before he met the weird sisters; i.e. before he comes upon the stage? He was brave and a good fighter. If we did not learn this from the wounded soldier, we should infer it from that last flash of courage, which is roused by the taunts of Macduff when all hope is lost.

He was not pitiless. His wife, ready to be criminal for his glory, fears his nature—

It is too full o' the milk of human kindness,
To catch the nearest way.

He was ambitious of bad ends, but hindered by scruples. She says—

Thou wouldst be great;
Art not without ambition.

And again—

Wouldst not play false,
And yet wouldst wrongly win.

It may be that he had confided to his wife some thought of supplanting the king, for she says that, when he broke the enterprise to her—

Nor time nor place
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both.

Now at their first meeting on the stage he knows, and tells her, that time and place are made for him—

Duncan comes here to-night.

But whether this be so or no, Macbeth, before he met the witches on the heath, was no blunt and honest soldier, but one whose evil ambition was hindered by scruples, and whose little pity seemed great to the woman, who for his sake was pitiless.

What was he when he had heard the supernatural prophecies?—what is he as we see and hear him in the play? The three sisters have scarce

melted into air, when he, with ambition doubly strong but scruples still with him, falls to questioning himself about this "supernatural soliciting"—

If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings.
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man, that function
Is smothered in surmise, and nothing is
But what is not.

Here is a man, not only full of dangerous thoughts, but somewhat apt to question and analyse himself. This is surely not that plain soldierly fellow, who would barely think of murder, much less of his thought of murder, until his wife drove him to it. Here on the heath, but some few minutes after he has been hailed as king, he says—

My thought, whose murder *yet* is but fantastical.

Soon in the very presence of Duncan, who has received him with much honour, he turns again to read himself, and finds his ambition, his scruples, and the hope to overcome them—

Stars, hide your fires!
Let not light see my black and deep desires;
The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be,
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.

And now when he desires to kill, and hopes to dare to kill, he goes to his wife. All the wish is there: he only does not purpose murder, because he dare not. For the natural courage of this great captain, when he has meddled with the supernatural and is on the way to crime, sinks lower and lower. When Lady Macbeth tries to bring him to a decision, he first puts her off with "We will speak farther." Then he slinks away from supper to meditate, as is natural in a contemplative and undecided man, on the same subject. He is alone, and his scruples come back upon him, and even a return of "human kindness," as he calls to mind how

This Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued,—

he sees his weakness, and is annoyed that it balks his desire—

I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent.

Even at the word the spur is brought to him by the strong-willed woman; who knows his feebleness. He weakly combats her.

"We will proceed no farther in this business," sounds strong enough; but he instantly weakens it by pleading his new honours as a reason, and

shifts his ground in the usual way from the "I won't" to the "Perhaps I can't." "If we should fail," he says. A little more, and he is resolved, resolved in spite of fear—

I am settled, and bend up
Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.

So they go off together, he to brood over his murder, she to keep him to his purpose.

And here ends the first Act, in which surely Shakspeare's Macbeth is made sufficiently clear—ambitious, self-questioning, hesitating, but impatient with the weakness which makes him hesitate. In the rest of the play we gain but little farther knowledge of the character—only he grows more cowardly. He pauses in the very moment of action, until he at last remembers—

While I threat, he lives :

Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.

When he has killed the king, he is attacked by growing terror. He has heard a voice, which warned him he should sleep no more, and is appalled. He has forgotten to leave the daggers ; and when his wife bids him carry them back, he cries—

I am afraid to think what I have done ;
Look on't again, I dare not.

He has committed the crime, and is ready to lose the reward—nay, his life itself—because he dare not look upon his work. Well may the stronger nature call him "infirm of purpose," and tell him that she shamed "to wear a heart so white." "How is't with me," he cries, "when every noise appals me ?" The man is panic-stricken. Unreal daggers are before his eyes, and unnatural voices in his ears. If Lady Macbeth did not plan and do everything needful after the murder, he would be found with the bloody weapons in his hands. When he has killed Duncan, he thinks of Banquo as a new cause of fear—

To be thus is nothing,
But to be *safely* thus. Our fears in Banquo
Stick deep.

He cannot bear the terror—

But let the frame of things disjoint,
Both the worlds suffer,
Ere we will eat our meal in fear, and sleep
In the affliction of these terrible dreams,
That shake us nightly.

He almost envies the dead—

Duncan is in his grave ;
After life's fitful fever he sleeps well.

Duncan has nothing to fear—

Nor steel nor poison,
Malice domestic, foreign levy, nothing
Can touch him further !

He can know no peace until Banquo and his son are dead—

O ! full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife.
Thou know'st that Banquo and his Fleance live.

It is the old story of the trembling tyrant, who will never feel safe, but always hopes that the next murder will make him so. When he hears that Fleance has escaped, he cries—

Then comes my fit again : I had else been perfect :
Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,
As broad, and general as the casing air ;
But now, I am cabined, cribbed, confin'd, bound in
To saucy doubts and fears.

Note how often the word "fear" is in his mouth. The fear becomes abject terror when he sees the ghost.

Are you a man ?

asks Lady Macbeth. And again—

This is the very painting of your fear :
This is the air-drawn dagger, which, you said,
Led you to Duncan.

And again she asks—

What ! quite unmann'd in folly ?

Though he knows that he is betraying himself by his panic, though he is able to explain to his guests that he has "a strange infirmity, which is nothing" to those that know him ; yet the next moment he is crying out again—

Avant ! and quit my sight.

His terror is too strong for his self-control. He is still trembling at the memory of Banquo, when his active mind turns to a new cause of alarm in Macduff. Note the poor old plan of the timid tyrant—

There's not one of them, but in his house
I keep a servant fee'd.

Note, too, that there is no delight in slaughter—

I am in blood
Stept in so far, that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er.

He feels that it is "tedious," but that he must wade on to safety. As yet there is no blood-madness, no killing for killing's sake. Only he fears that Banquo's apparition threatens some ill, perhaps from the Thane of Fife. It is too awful to be in doubt—

I will to-morrow
(And betimes I will) to the weird sisters:
More shall they speak ; for now I am bent to know,
By the worst means, the worst.

When the first apparition bids him beware Macduff, he says—

Thou hast harped my fear aright.

At the promise of the second, that "none of woman born" shall harm him, he feels a sudden certainty of safety—

Then live, Macduff : what need I fear of thee ?

But the next moment he doubts—

But yet I'll make assurance doubly sure,
And take a bond of fate : thou shalt not live ;
That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,
And sleep in spite of thunder.

He hears the second promise of safety, and as his fears decline, his ambition springs up in its first strength. To sleep in peace was his first wish. Now he cares to ask if Banquo's issue shall reign. His new confidence is shown in his threat to the witches—

I will be satisfied : deny me this, ;
And an eternal curse fall on you !

Made strong again by supernatural pledges, he sees how weak he has been, and declares—

From this moment,
The very firstlings of my heart shall be
The firstlings of my hand.

No more self-questioning and hesitating. He feels himself strong, and will act. It is good policy to "seize upon Fife," but not to kill Macduff's wife and children. This is the first act of Macbeth which is wantonly cruel ; and here for the first time we see the taste for blood, which grows upon the murderer. Now he kills for pleasure—

Each new morn
New widows howl, new orphans cry ; new sorrows
Strike heaven on the face,—

so all men are estranged from him, and the hour of his fall draws near. As it comes, the fears which he had put away throrg round him ; but he clings desperately to the prophecies of the Pit of Acheron. If he only allow himself to doubt those, he will fall on the instant into absolute despair. He has nothing in which to trust but those two sentences. But they make him safe, and all his soul is bent upon his safety. Yet there is room for a touch of that "human kindness," which in small measure enough was once natural to the man—

My way of life
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf ;
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have.

It is a glimpse of something kindlier in him, though it is but self-pity. The next moment he is in wild excitement again, and he goes out uttering his spell against the thronging terrors—

I will not be afraid of death and bane,
Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane.

He will not fear. He is so strong in those promises, that he looks back wonderingly at the time when he was so frightened—

I have almost forgot the taste of fears.
 The time has been, my senses would have cool'd
 To hear a night-shriek ; and my fell of hair
 Would at the dismal treatise rouse, and stir,
 As life were in't.

There can be nothing more fearful than he has undergone. They tell him that his wife is dead ; but it has nothing to do with his beloved charm ; and so he can moralise about it. How different is his cry when he hears that Birnam Wood is moving. "Liar and slave !" he shouts. He can't stand still now. At the first doubt the fears crowd in upon him. There is no relief but in action—

Blow wind ! come wrack !
 At least we'll die with harness on our back.

But he does not despair yet. One pledge of safety still remains, and he grasps it like a madman—

What's he,
 That was not born of woman ? Such a one
 Am I to fear, or none.

There is no room for any other thought. He does not think of his dead wife. The whole man is concentrated on the effort to ward off the terror from himself. He kills young Siward, and standing over his body says—

Thou wast born of woman :
 But swords smile at, weapons laugh to scorn,
 Brandish'd by man that's of a woman born.

Macduff finds him. For a moment it recalls to him his first purposeless murder—

My soul is too much charg'd
 With blood of thine already.

Then he repeats his spell against fear—

I bear a charmed life, which must not yield
 To one of woman born.

He hears that that, like the other promise, is vain, and feels that he is alone. His people have left him, and his wife is dead. He thought little of them, while the powers of darkness were with him to make him safe. Now he knows that he is lost, and cries—

Accurs'd be the tongue that tells me so,
 For it hath cow'd my better part of man.

He would slink away, when at the taunts of his enemy there springs up in him a brief flash of the old martial courage, which he has not felt since he slew "the merciless Macdonwald." He has still a sword and shield—

Though Birnam Wood be come to Dunsinane,
 And thou oppos'd, being of no woman born,
 Yet I will try the last. Before my body
 I throw my warlike shield : lay on, Macduff ;
 And damn'd be him that first cries, "Hold, enough."

So

Nothing in his life
 Became him like the leaving it.

The only virtues which he ever had—some tenderness of heart, however little, and much courage in the field—are shown at his last meeting with Macduff.

Is it not plain that Macbeth throughout the play is falling more and more under the dominion of fear? At first his ambition is stronger than his fear: at last he is only ambitious of safety. His evil career is primarily due to his own "black and deep desires," and only secondarily to supernatural suggestions. To his wife he owes not the wish to kill, but the choice of the right means to gain his end. Had she arranged the murder of Banquo, Fleance had not escaped.

And now, if this is Shakspeare's Macbeth, is it not time to give up the other, who is brave and dignified, for all his crimes? Stage traditions grow, until there is accumulated a body of unwritten laws, which declare how parts should be played. For many of these traditions there is no authority in the text of the plays. The actor of these restless days, impatient of precedent, goes back to the book for instruction. It is only fair that the critic should go there too. Let it be granted that the Kembles and the Keans were great: Shakspeare is greater than all of them put together. To see a powerful performance helps the critic, if he is well acquainted with the text: if he is not, it very often misleads him. Finally, the acting of a weaker man who shows that he has a true conception of the character is more worthy of praise than that of his stronger rival whose conception is faulty. For all which truisms I offer no apology, since a truism is that which has to be repeated *ad nauseam*, because nobody will attend to it.

Perhaps it is scant courtesy to Mr. Irving to refer to him so briefly, but I cannot close a paper on Macbeth without a word of praise for his latest interpreter. Judging from a single performance, I think that he has read the character aright, and represents it well, though not equally well throughout. His doubts and fears before and after the murder of Duncan were wonderfully real, as was his despairing onslaught on Macduff; but one only half believes in his terror before the ghost of Banquo. Everywhere there is art, but it is not everywhere concealed. Mr. Irving has been blamed for inelegance, but I think unjustly. He is picturesque, not statuesque, less graceful than vivid, and belongs, as Macbeth should, to the time of Scotch witches, not of Greek Fate.

J. R. S.

Automatic Chess and Card Playing.

WHATEVER opinion we may form on the question whether men are automata, we must admit that men make automata achieve remarkable feats as mechanical ingenuity increases. The machines employed in manufactures, which must be regarded as automatic workmen, grow so wonderfully towards perfection that they have been described (almost truly) as actually thinking for their employers. Dr. Anderson, for example, a civil engineer and a practical man, speaks thus of two orders of instruments, one order inferior to the other but still wonderful in its way:—Instruments of the former kind “may be said to work by a sort of blind routine; they have only a single idea imparted to them which they reiterate; but they have not the faculty of thinking for themselves. If any difficulty arises in the course of their working, they are at a loss what to do, and not unfrequently break their hearts over the dilemma” (poor things). But those of the superior order, “not only have ideas embodied in them,” like the former, “but, in addition, they have what we may almost call a reasoning faculty. They have the capacity of putting several ideas together, then running up the existing conditions, and arriving at a practical decision in a fraction of a second, a mental process which would occupy a learned philosopher for hours, even if [he were] furnished with all the facts of the case.” “There are other tools,” he proceeds, “which are provided with a nervous system, which pervades their mechanism, whereby if any disorder of their normal condition occurs they instantly communicate the fact to a sort of brain, and stop of their own accord. Other tools perform the most difficult mathematical calculations, and are capable of printing the result, so that no error may occur in copying.”

We have not, however, any intention of considering here the various processes used in machinery, or the manner in which the reasoning, controlling, and (what Paley thought incredible) the reproductive powers of machinery may be illustrated. Nor, indeed, would any description of the contrivances used in automata be in place in these pages. We propose simply to consider in a general way some of the questions suggested by the feats of so-called automata, like Kemplen's chess-player, the chess-player at the Crystal Palace, and Mr. Maskelyne's Psycho.

So far as we know, no really automatic player of games of skill has yet been constructed. Babbage devised a machine for playing the lively game called “noughts and crosses,” which, however, can hardly be called a game of skill. But it is noteworthy that Babbage believed in the possibility of making a really automatic chess-player. His reasoning was sound, so far

as abstract possibility is concerned ; though he certainly did not succeed in showing how the feat was practically to be accomplished. The argument for the theoretical possibility may be thus presented.—A chess-board has sixty-four squares and there are thirty-two men. Hence, the actual number of arrangements of the men is limited, and would be so even if each man might stand on any square, and if there could be any disproportion between the two forces in point of number. But in reality the number of possible positions is considerably reduced by the peculiarities belonging to the nature of the game. Thus, a pawn never stands either on the first or eighth rank, while many positions in which the pieces might be set up cannot possibly be brought about in actual play. For example, a position in which a bishop is anywhere except at his own square, while the two pawns which prevent his leaving that square are unmoved, is impossible in actual play ; and there are many other positions which cannot result in a real game.* Even, however, with all such deductions the number of possible positions must be counted by millions. Now, suppose we take any position whatever, and that it is white's turn to play. There must be some move which is better for him than any other, or—to be more exact—which is not surpassed in strength by any other move. And it must be possible, by playing a sufficient number of games from that position, to find out what that move is. We say possible, not meaning practicable. Thousands of games might be played from that position ; still if thousands of players were set to work to go through these games *seriatim*, the consequences of every possible line of play from that position could be determined with certainty. Not, however, to make the task of the inventor more arduous than it need be, let us simply suppose that any such selected position is submitted to the analysis of twenty players of the first class. Then doubtless either the very best or at least a very effective move would be found for white. Suppose this done in succession for all the possible positions. (The task of finding a winning move would be in many cases exceedingly easy.) This done, and the results carefully recorded, the task of the mechanician begins. What he has to do is to provide that on the formation of any given position by the move of a black piece, mechanism should be started which would cause the automaton to make the proper move, already assigned, for white. This Babbage pronounced to be

* Except when the arrangement of the pieces at starting is altered—a plan adopted by Mongredien, formerly President of the St. George's Club, to equalise players learned and unlearned in the book openings. Again, games are sometimes played under unusual conditions—though more rarely now than in former times. To the true lover of the royal game such arrangements are as far removed from real chess, as the game described by Noailles in Tennyson's *Queen Mary*—

Strange game of chess ! a King

That with her own pawns plays against a Queen,
Whose play is all to find herself a King.

. a knight

That with an ass's, not a horse's, head
Skips every way.

mechanically feasible. We need not here consider precisely how it might be done ; but the principles on which the move of a black piece might be made to cause one particular set of movements can easily be indicated. Suppose each piece to stand on a base of a particular shape which would fit in only one way into a corresponding depressed portion of each square of the chess-board ; suppose further each different piece (queen, bishop, rook, and so on) to have a definite set of projections underneath, so that when a piece is set down into the depression of a square, a definite set of springs would be pressed, which, when lifted, would be released. Then, when a black piece was lifted, releasing certain springs, the concealed machinery would assume the condition corresponding to the position *without* that piece ; but when the black piece was set down in a new place by the player, certain springs would be touched, while the rest of the machinery would be in a particular condition. Thus, the machinery would be actuated in a definite manner and a definite move would be the result.* This move might either be simply the removal of a white piece from one position to another ; or the replacement of a black piece (or pawn) by a white piece ; or the movement of a white pawn to the eighth row (either simply or by a capture) and its replacement by some white piece—or, in addition, check might be given to the black king, and the automaton might indicate this by some movement of his head or hands. All this could readily be effected by machinery. And, equally well, movements might be arranged to indicate that a false move had been made by the automaton's opponent, either by moving a piece incorrectly, or by leaving the black king in check.

So far as concerns the mechanism required to effect these movements, we need not hesitate to accept Babbage's assurance that there would be no insuperable or very serious difficulty. The real difficulty in the construction of an automatic chess-player resides in the preliminary investigation of the chess positions. These are so numerous, and in a large number of cases the selection of the best move is so difficult, that it would be hopeless to attempt the task, even if some great advantage to the whole human race promised to reward such labours. And since, in reality, they would be almost absolutely profitless, it is quite certain that such a task will never be undertaken. We may say, indeed, that the labour would be absolutely profitless, since the only persons who could conceivably gain by an achievement of the kind would be the proprietors of the machinery, and it is certain that the cost would enormously exceed any possible returns they could obtain by exhibiting the automaton.

We may take it for granted then, whenever we see an automaton chess-player ready to encounter all comers—that is, not merely playing through

* These springs would be equally touched by the same piece moved to that square from any other position ; but either they would not, *when so moved*, actuate the same mechanism (the other internal arrangements being differently situated at the moment), or else, though they might actuate the same mechanism, it would operate on other mechanism differently placed, and so produce different effects.

a series of set games, either with the exhibitor or a confederate—that there is a concealed player directing the automaton's play. The concealed player need not necessarily be within the figure—though in all the automatic chess-players yet made this has been the case. If he is placed anywhere so that he can see the board, he might, by suitably arranged mechanism, cause the automaton to make the proper move. However, the player has hitherto been concealed within the figure. In Kemplen's, the board stood above the space where Maelzel was concealed while the automation was actually playing. When the interior was exposed to view, by opening a series of doors, Maelzel changed his position from one part to another, until on the closing of the last door he took up his position for playing. Underneath the board were attached sixty-four threads, one for each square, each carrying a small iron ball. Within each piece was a strong magnet, so that the ball under any square on which a piece stood was attracted to the under side of the board. So soon as a piece was moved, the ball under it, ceasing to be attracted, was left to hang by its thread; and when the piece was put down in a new place, the ball which had been hanging there immediately jumped up and adhered to the under side of the board. Or if a piece was taken, then, when it was removed the ball under it fell, and when the capturing piece took the place of the captured, the ball flew up again. Maelzel had a small board in his lap on which he repeated the move of the automaton's opponent as indicated by the movements of the balls. Having decided on his reply, he communicated the proper movements to the automaton. And so the game proceeded, with little more difficulty to Maelzel than if he were playing in the ordinary way; for by continual practice he was able to make the moves on his own board, both for his opponent and for himself, and to set the machinery in motion, with scarce a second's loss of time. We do not of course, mean that he played in a second—for when he was encountered by strong players he was often obliged to deliberate over his moves—but that he did not take more than a second or two over the merely mechanical part of his work.*

As regards Maelzel's power as a chess-player, it would not be easy to form an opinion, though fifty of his games have been preserved. He was certainly not a player of the first force in set encounters, though he vanquished some very good players. Of course, when the automaton was exhibited quick play was expected on both sides. Those who visit an exhibition of the sort are seldom much interested in chess-playing itself, and could certainly not endure with patience the slow play of a chess match, even as chess matches have been conducted since the time-limit was introduced.† Maelzel himself played with astonishing rapidity; and

* Kemplen's automaton was destroyed by fire in Philadelphia, and the nature of the mechanism was never fully explained. We believe, however, that the above account of the arrangement for indicating the moves to Maelzel was either given by Kemplen himself, or admitted by him to be correct.

† According to a recent arrangement adopted for chess tournaments, each player is allowed an hour for twenty moves, or some other number agreed upon. Thus, if he

his opponents usually felt bound to emulate him in this respect, or at least to move much more rapidly than any player would think of doing in a set encounter. The natural result usually followed in the case of Maelzel's opponents—they made oversights—while he himself was by long practice able to play very rapidly without making mistakes, or at least without making such palpable blunders as his opponents.

It has been stated that the automaton chess-player at the Crystal Palace is only a copy of Kemplen's chess-player. But any one who remembers the older automaton, or who has read a correct description of it, will perceive that the present figure is different in several essential respects. Kemplen's automaton played with his left hand, a peculiarity only noticed by the ingenious contriver of the machine, when it was too late to modify the arrangement. The automaton at the Crystal Palace plays with the right hand. But the most important difference is in the position of the chess-board. The board of Kemplen's figure rested on a table (really a chest), and the movements were recorded directly under the board, in the manner already explained. The chess-board of the Crystal Palace automaton stands on a single upright pillar, of small cross section. The mover of the present automaton is, beyond doubt, concealed within the figure, not in some adjacent place whence he could see the board; and the various parts of the interior are shown, as in the case of Kemplen's automaton. But several parts are thrown open at once, so that, as a good number of visitors may be in the room at the same time, and there is no restriction on their movements while the interior is being exhibited, it appears impossible that a living person can be concealed, at least a person old enough to play a good game at chess. But the human frame can be concealed in a much smaller space than is usually supposed, if the space is specially arranged for the purpose. It is not true, as was stated by the

plays several moves somewhat rapidly he may give a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes to a single move at some crisis of the game. Occasionally also, twenty minutes' grace, or the like, is allowed once in the game, over and above the time-allowance for the other moves. But before the time-limit was introduced, players would sometimes give an hour and more to a single move. Kolisch, a skilful German, once gave two hours to a move in a game which (we are glad to be able to add) he lost, though he won the match of which it formed part. In the amusing little work, the *Chess Player's Annual* (the only published volume, so far as we know), edited by Professor Tomlinson of King's College, the following passage occurs in the description of a game played by Tomlinson and three friends in consultation against Herr Löwenthal, Howard Staunton looking on. "I considered for some time and Beta asked Mr. Staunton what was the longest time he had ever to wait for a move, 'The longest time,' said S., 'I ever had to wait was in playing a match with a man who wore out everybody—seconds, spectators, and myself. We had been playing many hours, and were left alone, when he coolly said, 'I'm a poor man and cannot afford to lose this match. I must sit you out.' That being the case, and no witnesses present, I had nothing to do but to give up the match, and write him a cheque for the money.'" In the same paper, mention is made of a fourteen hours' sitting at chess. But after all this is nothing to a case recently recorded in the *Westminster Gazette*, in which a sitting at whist lasted four days.

manager of a rival automaton, that the concealed player retreats under the floor itself of the room, before the doors are thrown open ; for since that statement was made the figure has been raised above the floor. But it is certain that during the play the player is within the figure. Immediately after the last door is closed the frame of the figure vibrates perceptibly, precisely as one would expect it to vibrate as a concealed player squeezed himself, as it were, into the proper position for observing the play of opponents and guiding the motions of the figure.

It seems to us probable, that at the same moment a portion of the machinery, which during the inspection had seemed to occupy the chest of the figure, may be shifted, so that room is found there for the head of the concealed player. It is tolerably certain that the player can see the board itself (which was not the case with Maelzel). He can hear also what is said by the visitors, even in low tones. We tested this on one occasion. A friend, who is a tolerably good player, was conducting a game, and from time to time we suggested a move or two. To this the automaton made no objection, though consultation is forbidden (of which at the time we were not aware), and he might have indicated objection by shaking his head, as when a false move is made. But it happened that at one stage of the game we perceived a line of play by which a noteworthy advantage could have been gained, and whispered accordingly to our friend, giving the series of moves in a low voice ; so low, in fact, that our friend did not catch the suggestion perfectly. So soon as the complete series of moves had been indicated, the automaton's head wagged disapproval, doubtless because the line suggested would have been fatal to the automaton's game. That the suggestion was sound appeared soon, for our friend adopted another move, and in a move or two was compelled to resign, when, by the gracious permission of the automaton, the position was restored, and on examination it was found that a piece must have been captured by the proposed line of play. It is clear, then, that the concealed player, who had been indifferent when indifferent suggestions were made, had caught the drift of the proposed line of play, and objected accordingly. He made no movement until the whole scheme had been indicated. No doubt experience has taught him that in most cases such suggestions are likely rather to help his game ; and in the present case the series of moves began with a sacrifice which, if unsound, would have given him the game at once. The very instant he perceived that it was sound, he set the automaton's head shaking.

The automaton plays a fair game, though not a very strong one. We have played several games with him, usually with the result that, after securing a winning game, some egregious blunder has brought destruction upon us. But this can scarcely fail to happen, even with practised players, when twenty or thirty moves are played on both sides in between five and ten minutes ; and the writer is by no means a practised player, not having played perhaps so many as fifty games in all, during the last twenty years. We have, however, twice beaten the automaton, and twice drawn games

with him, so that we have had opportunities of examining his play under varying conditions. (Those who have not seen him beaten may be interested to know that his manner of acknowledging defeat is by removing his king from the board.) He plays end games better than the openings, though with inexperienced players his management of the openings is effective. It really is worth while for one who is learning chess to try a few games with the automaton, if only to observe how quickly he breaks through the defences around a castled king. He plays a game which usually gives him an attack of this kind. When he has the first move he opens with what is called the *Giuoco Piano* (or quiet game), adopting for fourth and fifth moves, usually, the advance of queen's pawn one square and the castling of his king. For the sixth move he plays what is often regarded as a weak move, advancing his king's rook's pawn one square, which with him has a double object; first it prevents his king's knight from being pinned, and next it gives that piece a square to move to, which is very seldom so occupied by good players, yet affords a retreat whence the knight can be very effectually brought out at the right moment. In the meantime his opponent has usually brought out his king's knight and castled, without the precaution of providing against the pinning of the knight, a process which the automaton immediately attends to; after which, if his opponent is a weak player, the automaton makes very short work of him. On the other hand, if he is second player, the automaton will accept none of the familiar gambits which lead to the well-trodden book openings, except one which cannot safely be refused (called the Scotch gambit). Tried by ourselves twice with the familiar king's gambit, the automaton has both times declined it, and we have seen the same occur with others. The brilliant Evans gambit, which has now been analysed twenty moves deep, he avoids by simply declining to bring out his king's bishop at the third move, playing instead his king's rook's pawn one square. This is his weak point, for unquestionably the first player can then so continue the game that the automaton is practically two moves behind, and exposed to very strong assault. However, usually the opening player falls into a line of operations in which the automaton's weak move becomes a serviceable one; and often the game pursues much the same course, after a while, as when the automaton has the first move.

It will be understood that there is a little sameness in the openings. Indeed, we have seen identically the same moves played in two games on both sides up to the twelfth or thereabouts—certainly without collusion.*

* There are some openings at chess where the moves on both sides fall in so naturally, as it were, that it is quite common for the first ten or twelve moves to be repeated even by players who, though strong, are not book learned in chess. There is one particular form, indeed, of the Scotch gambit, which has led several times to the same game right through, mate occurring to the second player soon after the twentieth move. The game is given in full in the *Westminster Papers*, for Oct. 1874, with the following letter over the initials of a well-known amateur:—"Nothing is more common than to hear it said that the same game of chess, i.e. the same sequence of moves,

Yet chess is a game so full of resources that no one need fear that a series of games with the automaton will want the charm of variety. Besides, it is open to any player who wishes to take the automaton off the beaten track, to adopt some out-of-the-way opening, and this whether the automaton play first or second move. (For each game sixpence is charged.)

It would appear that this wooden-headed gentleman is not above studying the books, for on a chair behind the figure one may usually see a book which looks like Staunton's familiar Hand-book. On the occasion of our last visit, it so chanced that no visitors were present (the theatre was open, and *Our American Cousin* was being performed). After paying our sixpence, we had to wait a few minutes before the door was opened, during which time, doubtless, the player concealed himself within the figure. On entering, we noticed that the hand-book was turned down on its open face, and, so far as we could judge, it was opened about where the automaton's favourite opening is dealt with by Staunton. Yet we must admit that there is very little book-work in the automaton's game.

With regard to the whist-playing of Psycho, we are not able to speak from experience in actual play. We fancied at our first visit that the invitation addressed to the audience to join in the game was like a Spaniard's invitation to his guests to regard his house and all that is in it as their own. At least, the gentlemen who took part in the game on that occasion exhibited a coolness of demeanour on the platform which one would not expect from persons who had volunteered merely lest the performance should come to a stand-still.

But it so chanced that at our second visit a very eminent man of science, president of one of the chief learned societies, went on the stage to examine the figure, and eventually took a hand at whist. He most assuredly was not a confederate, and it is certain, therefore, that the automaton plays a *bonâ-fide* game. In passing, we may remark that Psycho's play is not very profound, nor even always sound.*

has never been played more than once. There is, however, a curious exception to this rule, with which many of your readers may not be acquainted. Some six months ago, at the Divan, I was playing a Scotch gambit, and was able to repeat move after move, a game which I had perused not long before in a well-known work, the *Neueste Theorie und Praxis* (a game between Klieforth and Schliemann). The only remarkable thing here was the unswerving fidelity with which my opponent followed the model, even to the extent of suffering the rather pretty mate. When the game was finished, I, of course, explained my source of inspiration; and Herren Steinitz and Zukertort, to whom the curiosity was shown, told us that each had previously played the game, move for move, on at least one occasion. Only the other day I discovered another edition, in an old volume of the *Leipziger Schachzeitung* (vol. for 1870, p. 229), and, therefore, being of opinion that this variation has already had more than its due share of success, I shall beg you to set up a light-house near the dangerous rock, for the benefit of your weaker chess brethren." For the further benefit of those who may examine the game, we may mention that the second player's trouble arises from his seventh move.

* In one recorded game we find Psycho afflicted by the prevailing epidemic of the

The natural idea in the case of an automaton like Psycho is that there is a player concealed within the figure. The figure and box are certainly large enough to give room for a small boy. Nor does the prodding which the figure receives from Mr. Maskelyne prove that there is no boy so concealed, for there is room between the rod and the face of the lower enclosure for a boy's legs. We suppose the boy to be in a sitting but somewhat askew posture, with his knees where the legs of the figure appear. We find from the dimensions of the figure and box, as indicated in the photograph (Mr. Maskelyne's height in the picture affording a sufficient scale of measurement), that there is room for a boy about four feet in height, and rather thin, but not remarkably so. It is not necessary to suppose that the boy plays as good a game at whist as Psycho seems to do, for his play in all the rounds but one or two may be directed by Mr. Maskelyne, pre-arranged signals indicating the *number* of the card to be played, that is, its position on the arc in front of Psycho. Mr. Maskelyne appears certainly to see each card as he inserts it in the arc, though he disclaims all knowledge of the hand. With a little practice, a very moderate memory could retain the remembrance of thirteen cards.

We may note, in passing, that beyond all reasonable doubt the card tricks are performed by Mr. Maskelyne, and the work of the automaton is limited to the extraction of the card, properly placed for the purpose in the small box into which the exhibitor carefully bestows the pack. And this may serve to guide us in forming an opinion about the whist play and the numerical calculations. But it would serve no useful purpose to inquire in what particular way mechanical effects are brought about in a case like this, where there can be no such inspection as would really help to determine the *modus operandi*. Indeed, when well-devised conjuring tricks are shown, one can usually conceive many ways in which the effects might be obtained, so far as observed facts are concerned; and the odds are heavy against the right method being hit upon, so that usually the performer can prove any suggested explanation to be incorrect.*

Blue Peter—signalling for trumps without reason. We have not noticed whether he has adopted the device of playing lowest but one in leading from five in suit. His discarding struck our inexperienced mind as rather wild. But as his partner was satisfied, we assume the play was right.

* Sometimes the explanation of a trick which seems unusually difficult is, in reality, unusually simple. Take, for instance, such a card trick as the following, which, so far as we know, is not in the books:—A pack of cards is handed to a person, who is asked to select any card, remove it, and return the pack, which is then handed to (say) two other persons in the same way. After this the conjuror asks the first person to take the pack again, and place the selected card anywhere in it. On receiving back the pack the conjuror proceeds, in any way he thinks likely to be effective, to produce the card thus taken and returned, presently showing that he also knows the two other drawn cards, which were not returned. Supposing the three persons not to be confederates, what, at a first view, can be more perplexing than this? The cards can neither have been "forced" on the persons drawing them, nor can the conjuror have in any way noted where the returned card was placed (if he could this would not help him to a knowledge of the other two cards), for the pack

It will be more interesting to inquire whether a figure might not be made to do all that Psycho does without any person being concealed within it, and without any material connection with the person guiding its movements. Let it be distinctly understood that in what follows we are describing a method certainly *not* employed for working any automaton card-player or chess-player ever yet made.

We pass over such contrivances as the use of a powerful magnet, or the imperceptible tilting of a portion of the floor on which a figure stands, whereby gravity may be caused to act on a concealed arm suitably loaded and adjusted (as in the case of certain clocks). In fact, as we said at the outset, any consideration of mechanical details or the like would here be quite out of place. What we propose is, simply to show how an unseen apparatus might be made to direct the motions of a figure,—a whist-playing figure, let us say,—placed at a considerable distance from it.

The motive power we would select then (among many that might be thought of) would be dark heat, such as resides in a mass of metal heated just short of luminosity. Or a hollow globe filled with hot water would serve equally well. Either would retain a sufficient quantity of heat for a much longer time than the exhibition would last. This source of heat could be placed above the figure or on the same level, at any convenient distance. A curved mirror must be placed so as to reflect the obscure heat convergently towards the figure. This mirror must be capable of easy adjustment, so that the heat-focus can be shifted at will to any one of a set of determinate points of the figure. The mirror and heated globe could readily be placed where the audience, or even any one on the stage, could not see them. For it is only necessary that they should be within the visual range of an eye occupying the place of a part of the figure itself, and the line from this part to the globe might readily be so situated that no person could place himself where he could look along it. For example, the part of the figure on which the rays were converged might be seven feet above the stage; or again, the heated globe might be placed either beyond the audience or beyond the whist-table, and then persons on the stage might reasonably be requested to avoid getting in the way of the audience, or between the figure and the whist-table, the only positions whence they could see the globe and mirror. But in reality there would be no occasion

was out of his hands when the cards were taken and when one of them was returned. Yet nothing can be simpler than *one* way in which the trick can be performed, nor easier to the practised card-conjuror. A fine line drawn diagonally down one of the long sides of the pack affords a sharp-eyed person the ready means of detecting at a glance any card returned to the pack in a new position, and also the former position of any other cards which have been removed without being returned. Knowing so much, the conjuror, talking a little about card-tricks (using the pack to illustrate what he says), can find abundant opportunities to bring the returned card (the marked edge of which he knows by its displacement) to the top or bottom of the pack, or to produce it in any desired way, and to see each of the cards next preceding the other removed ones, whence, knowing the arrangement of the pack, he knows the removed cards themselves.

that the globe and mirror should even be in *sight* of the figure (that is, placed so that to an eye situated where the figure is they could be seen). For heat can pass where light cannot pass, and a screen of black glass or smoked quartz covering the niche or other receptacle wherein the globe and mirror were placed would cut off very little of the heat, while effectually hiding the globe and mirror from view.*

Having now a motive force and the power of directing its action on different parts of the figure, we might adopt a variety of contrivances for making this action produce any desired movements. The mere expansive effect of the heat would suffice to start delicate machinery, whereby the well-poised arm of the figure could be brought round to a particular position, the hand then nipping a card, lifting it, and placing it down as Psycho does. For the construction of mechanism merely to effect these movements would of course be a very simple matter. What perplexes those who see automata at work is not the invention of mechanism for producing the movements, but to imagine how the mechanism is started and stopped without being touched. No one acquainted with the resources of mechanism would wonder, for instance, if Psycho were seen to play the right card when a particular knob was touched. The source of wonder is the action of the figure without apparent guidance. Now the heat from the concealed globe could be converged by the mirror on any desired point, and would as effectually set machinery in motion as though a knob at that point had been pressed. If the mere expansive action of the heat were insufficient, or in other words if the machinery were not of sufficient delicacy to be so set in motion, then the knobs could be the faces of small thermopiles, such as lecturers use to display the effects of small changes of temperature. A surface no larger than a sixpence, and easily made quite undistinguishable from the neighbouring surface, would suffice to generate an electric current and start the machinery, with less heat than is generated by moving a finger a few inches along a piece of wood. Thirteen such surfaces would be as thirteen knobs for setting the figure to play any one of thirteen cards. And in a much smaller figure than Psycho (even without the box he stands on) thirty or forty distinct operations might easily be provided for by mechanism, and directed by the motion of the concealed mirror, deflecting the heat on any one of thirty or forty corresponding points of the figure's surface. If the heat globe were large and the mirror good, the sensitive surfaces might be very small, and act entirely by expansion through heat. In this case the figure might be a mere doll in size. If, on the other hand, thermopiles were used, a figure nearly as large as Psycho would be required, because of the room required for suitably conveying the electric currents; but in this case the heat-globe and mirror might be very small. Of course the figure would have to be very carefully placed in a particular position, and the movements of

* The globe might even be concealed by the focussing apparatus, substituting for the mirror a lens of black glass or smoked quartz.

the mirror carefully arranged beforehand. Thus, let us suppose that when the figure was set on its pedestal, and the mirror in its mean position, the heat was focussed on a certain non-sensitive spot in the middle of the sensitive points (arranged in rows). Suppose now that the concealed operator, who might very well be so placed as to see both the card-table and the cards held by the figure, or who might be guided by a pre-arranged system of signalling (as in the ordinary *clairvoyance* trick *), perceives that the point he must act upon to cause the figure to play rightly, is on the third row above and on the fourth row to the right of this central point. Then it might be arranged that by giving three turns to a wheel causing the mirror to rotate so as to throw the beam of heat upwards, and four turns to another causing the mirror to rotate so as to throw the beam towards the right, the heat-focus would be thrown correctly, and in a second or two it would set the right machinery in action.†

A chess-playing figure might easily be constructed on a similar plan. The mechanical arrangements would of course be much more complex than for a whist-playing figure. Psycho, for instance, in playing whist, has only to be rotated on a vertical axis till the hand is over the right card, then the hand closes on the card, lifts, and drops it; and there are but thirteen cards. A chess-playing figure must not only be able to lift a piece from one square, setting it down on another (each piece according to its proper range of play), but must be able also to effect a capture, replacing a piece of the opponent's by a piece of his own.‡ But mechanical arrangements for this were provided in Kempen's Automaton. (In that exhibited at the Crystal Palace we imagine the concealed player moves the pieces more directly, though a good deal of mechanism is shown.) What a concealed player could do to set such mechanism as in Kempen's figure in motion could certainly be done by our "globe and mirror"; and the automaton could then be much smaller, having to contain no concealed player.

But in reality no special interest attaches to the question whether another Psycho or another chess automaton might be made, the movements of which should be directed by a remote and invisible source of

* We do not refer here to such *clairvoyance* as Carpenter, Zerffi, and others have dealt with, but to exhibitions of professed *clairvoyance*, in which a child is made to describe articles shown to the exhibitor, who conveys to the child by the words he uses, a sufficient description of the article (if it be any ordinary pocketable article).

† The operator may be a long way from the mirror thus worked, seeing that there is no difficulty whatever in providing connecting mechanism for directing a mirror from a distant point with the utmost accuracy on any desired point. In astronomical observations, for example, this is repeatedly accomplished. Nor, of course, would there be any difficulty in concealing such mechanism, seeing that it is to act on a concealed mirror.

‡ Except in the case of taking a pawn "in passing." *Apropos des bottes*, here is a little puzzle for young chess-players. (It was designed by Zukertort, who based a neat chess-problem on it.) How can double check be given by moving a piece which does not itself give check to the adverse king?

force. When such a scheme is mooted as that a daily journal should be set up in type in the provinces by a mechanism worked in London, all the so-called automata appear as mere toys. The point really worthy of notice is the command possessed by science over such matters, and the power which men of science possess, if they chose but to use it, to delude the world by wonder-working. If the object of science were to deceive men by mysterious exhibitions, all the contrivances of legerdemain, all the less ingenious devices of spiritualists and the like, would by comparison sink into utter insignificance. If we take only the wonders which science has accomplished (always openly), and imagine that men of science had agreed to hide their resources and methods from the world, how readily might a claim to supernatural powers have been established, or even pretended revelations promulgated! To take but a single instance. Who would dare to question what was said by men so favoured (apparently) by some power superior to natural laws, that they could communicate instantly with each other when thousands of miles apart? What profanity it would seem—supposing such men claimed to be messengers from a supreme being—to attempt to explain by natural laws the wonderful things they accomplished! We are fortunate in this, that the science of our time is outspoken. Not so many centuries ago something of the old spirit still remained, and great discoveries in science were guarded as carefully as the spiritualists in our time try to guard the contrivances by which they manage their deceptions. We have, however, to pass much farther back to reach a time when workers in science used their knowledge to delude the ignorant. We forbear from inquiring here how much of what was taught by the old astrologers and wonder-workers of Chaldæa and Egypt to strengthen their position among an ignorant and superstitious people, has come down even to our own day, and not only in matters regarded as superstitions, but in some still held in reverence by many millions of men. We simply say, It is well for mankind that the men of science of our day (especially those most maligned for their outspokenness) are honest. Were they leagued to deceive the world by working wonders, their task would be an easy one. To undeceive the world would be much more difficult.

I German Peasant Romance.

THE English reader who happens to be but slightly acquainted with German literature, and to have seen nothing of its fiction but a few translated children's fairy tales, may be ready to ask, on hearing of a new German story, whether indeed there are such things as German novels. If he travels into Germany his scepticism on this point will not, probably, be at once dissipated. Everywhere he will meet with English and French novels, in their original form as well as translated. He will find, for example, that at Berlin a new work of George Eliot appears almost on the same day on which it first sees the light in London. On the other hand, he will rarely come across original German novels, and his natural inference will be that the Germans are not a novel-producing people.

In a certain narrow sense the conclusion of our hypothetical countryman would be correct. What we understand by a novel in this country does not flourish very vigorously in Germany. The class of fiction which sets itself to study the characters and manners of contemporary life, and to weave a story of human effort amid fickle circumstances, so as not to transcend the limits of probability as determined by the familiar conditions of modern society, which seeks to paint common daily life merely for the sake of the subject, is not strongly represented in Germany. It is no doubt often said that German novelists have grown weary of the sentimental idealism of the older romance, typified in Werther's *Leiden*, and are now setting themselves to a praiseworthy study of reality. But, excepting those of a very few writers like Gustav Freytag, what romances worthy of being called works of art are there which content themselves with mirroring the swiftly shifting scenes of familiar daily life? The greater number of recent German romances—excepting those which are written in the interests of some political or social doctrine (*Tendenz-Romane*)—are studies of real life indeed, but of life in its remoter, simpler, and more picturesque aspects. The works may perhaps be divided into three classes: (1) those which describe characters and events distant in time—historical romances; (2) those which narrate scenes and incidents of life distant in space—ethnographic romances; and (3) those which delineate life and manners distant in what may be called social perspective—peasant romances. This last *genre* is perhaps the most successful of all. It includes the singularly picturesque studies of Auerbach, as well as many of the prettiest and most pathetic novelettes of Heyse and others.*

* An interesting epitome of the recent developments of German fiction may be found in Messrs. Gostwick and Harrison's *Outlines of German Literature*, chap. xxxii.

German fiction has approached reality, then, only it is not the common reality that lies day by day beneath our eye without arresting it. It is a reality which is remote from our common experiences, and which consequently yields us a morning freshness of impression. More than this—and here we seem to be coming to the real meaning of the phenomenon—it offers to the writer a far wider scope for creative imagination. To conceive modes of sentiment and types of character as they manifest themselves in these remote circumstances, to shape into consistent story the strange wild life which here throbs in various pulsation, is a work which stimulates to a most exalted pitch the powers of a poetic imagination; and German fiction, like German painting and German music, must, before all other things, be imaginative.* Once more, these remote forms of life are nearly always simple and unfettered by the conventional restraints of modern society. They show us the human heart uttering its sorrows and its delights with a frank simplicity which is strange to our modern ears. Is it far-fetched to suppose that even in its prose fiction the German mind betrays its eminently *lyrical* bent? Is it not probable that writers go back to these primitive types of society in order to get a deeper fountain of pure emotional experience than our highly civilised mode of life supplies? At least one may say with confidence that some of the most beautiful of German stories owe much of their charm to the single thread of emotion which harmoniously binds all their parts together. The whole narrative of one of these novels seems to be but the various play of one red flame of passion amid an ever-changing environment. The narrator cares less to paint the complicated hues of a complete existence, to show us the manifold energies of a human spirit in their intricate yet orderly combinations, than to reveal to us the palpitating movements of a single emotional development, to trace out for us the strange fantastic forms into which a highly emotional nature may break forth when acted upon solely on one side. In such stories the novelist appears to abandon the calm objective attitude of the epic and dramatic poet, and, like the lyrical, to make himself one with the being whose vivid emotion he seeks to express. If this be so, would it not be possible to connect the fact with another—namely, that the German drama has sought to represent lyrical expansions of feeling as distinct from rapid and various action, which fact may be observed most distinctly perhaps in the efforts of a great living composer to reduce the whole of drama to a musical form?

The qualities of German fiction just enumerated are abundantly illustrated in a peasant romance which was recently published in the pages of the new and excellent German periodical the *Deutsche Rundschau*. The story is entitled "Vulture-Wally" (*Die Geier-Wally*), and is from the pen of a lady, Frau Wilhelmine von Hillern. Its subject is the development of a girlish nature of singular impetuosity and of intense self-reliance,

* The fact that the same word *dichten* (to create by thinking) used to denote the work of the novelist and of the poet alike, seems to point to the stress which the German mind lays on the imaginative side of fiction.

reared amid the obdurate circumstances natural and social of a Tyrolese valley. The few but terribly energetic impulses which lie at the root of this girl's character are conceived and worked out with a fine imagination and splendid graphic powers. For its half-musical expression of the deepest currents of sorrow, this story may be compared with the most exquisite lyric poems. At the same time it displays a power—not too common among Germans—of narrating external incidents, and of depicting the reciprocal actions of men and women, which suggests that the writer might almost as easily have composed a deeply stirring drama. Unless we are greatly mistaken, this romance, with its portraiture of dark, fitful and almost weird feeling, which is at the same time always genuinely human, its narration of flashing and thrilling events, and its descriptions of the many fancy-stirring phases of Alpine scenery, will permanently hold a high place among the best fiction of the day.

The scene of the narrative is one of the wildest valleys in Tyrol, the celebrated Oetzthal. Who that has threaded its rough stony paths, and gazed on the mighty rocky elevations which are its walls, and on the soft snowy declivities beyond, on the foaming Ache which rushes in an unquenchable fury down its huge craggy abyss, and afterwards come upon one of its snugly compact villages, where a rough but genial curé is ready to do the duties of innkeeper; who that has observed its unsophisticated, hearty, if a little dignified, peasants gathering winter fodder on some far elevated slope, or pausing in their harvest work to kneel and pray at the sound of evening-bell; who that has been there need be told how fine a natural and social scene the authoress has here found for her plaintive idyll?

For in these remote haunts, it must be observed, the physical and the social circumstances are clearly related to one another. Man is here to a large extent the child of the nature around him: a nature doing so much for him in brief moments, stirring within him at the same time the hot impulses of the South, yet for the greater part curbing these soft desires by hard and vigorous conditions which call for the severest self-control and the most painful persistence in toil: a nature which woos his fancy with its many secret beauties, while it still more dismays and paralyses him by its many terrors. Little wonder that here the hopeful and comforting legends of the Catholic faith have hard work to displace the cruel and terrifying superstitions of heathen mythology. And as the individual, so the society. Here we find social groups cohering with a mighty tenacity up to a certain point, but beyond this falling into loose aggregates. Here men are sturdy adherents to family interests, but outside these narrow limits jealousies prevail. They keep much of the gloomy anti-social disposition to solitude amid their untamed rocky vastnesses. What few duties need to be performed have to be wrung, so to speak, from unwilling hands by the force of the severest social sanctions. The sharp penalties which hedge in the field of custom, and the more terrible penalties which loom forth behind the ordinances of the Church, serve to

make obedience a thing of stern necessity, to fail in which would be infinitely worse than disease or death. The one all-radiant virtue in this society is courage, including bodily hardihood and moral self-reliance. Hence the daring ambitions of the youth in perilous exploits. Hence, too, that somewhat cold and repellent exterior which men and women alike habitually wear. It seems but another side of this sturdy spirit of independence which shows itself in the intense pride of these people, their rigid insistence on the slightest distinctions of rank, and their most punctilious observance of traditional and family claims. Such are some of the chief characteristics of the people among whom our story moves.

At the very outset we are suddenly transported into the midst of this sublime yet sombre nature, with its moody yet daring and energetic folk.

Deep below through the Oetzthal there moved a solitary wanderer. Above him, at the eagle's elevation, on a giddy projection stood a girlish form, seen from the depth below no larger than an Alpenrose, yet sharply outlined against the blue sky and the glittering ice peaks of the Ferner. She stood there firm and still, however much the mountain gusts pulled and tugged at her, and gazed without giddiness into the depth where the Ache rushed foaming into the ravine, and an oblique ray of sunlight in its fine spray-mist painted shimmering prisms on the rocky wall. . . . She was not aware that the guide who accompanied the traveller, a gay-looking chamois hunter, raising his arm threateningly, pointed up to her and said to the stranger, "That is for certain the Vulture Wally who stands yonder, for no other lass would trust herself on that tiny projection so near the precipice. To look at her you would suppose the wind must blow her down, but she always does the opposite to what all rational Christians do."

Thereupon we are told of the famous exploit to which the girl owed her curious sobriquet. When only fourteen years old this wild mountain maid had, to the delight of her proud father, the wealthy "head peasant" or farmer, Stromminger by name, put to shame all the lads of the village by fetching a young vulture from its nest midway down a terrible cliff, to which she had to be lowered by a cord, which feat she only accomplished after a bloody fight with the parent vulture in mid air. A good deal of light is let in on the mode of training to which this wild young spirit had been subjected by the remark that this was the single occasion in her life on which her father kissed her.

But even here, amid these hard uncouth surroundings, there is a touch of some gracious softening influence. The untamed Alpine girl, who has never known a mother's mollifying tenderness, has to come under the gentle tendency of the Church. It is confirmation day at Sölden; and Wally, now fifteen years old, dressed in white with a wreath of coral, is led by her father to the church to receive grace from the bishop's hands. The girl, however, finds it hard work keeping her thoughts on the holy rite. Before entering the church, she hears that a young Alpine hero, a native of Sölden, named Joseph, has just succeeded in slaying a bear, which all the other youths of the district have failed to do, and that he is expected in Sölden that very day. Wally's imagination is fired with the story, and she is longing with impatience for the close of the service. At length it

is over; the procession of youths and maidens breaks up, and a cry announces the approach of the Bear Joseph. Wally sees him and thinks he surpasses all the other swains in height, and is lovely—"oh, as lovely as a picture!" She fancies almost that he shines like a light from afar. He looks just like the St. George in the altar-piece of the church.

The effect of the first love vision on this strong wayward nature is admirably described. She climbed up a tree in order to see him as he described his exploit, and was strangely moved with mingled delight and fear as his eye occasionally fell on her. Fond, silly Wally, spite of all thy fearless courage! Joseph took no heed of her confusion. "What had he to do with the newly confirmed child there in the tree. He had looked up to her once or twice, just as he might have looked up at a squirrel, nothing more."

The sad minor music into which Wally's happy love thoughts have to pass is already heard. The haughty crusty Stromminger, who cannot bear that another family should contest with his own the championship in bodily courage, soon boils over at sound of the abundant praise which is poured into Joseph's ears, forces the young hero by ugly words of insult to a struggle, and when mastered, retires fuming with rage against his victor. Wally's gaily tinted fancies are thus cruelly effaced. She knows she dare never again look admiringly on her beauteous knight. The incensed father half suspects her thoughts, forces a confession from her, and brutally strikes her to the ground as she ventures to pour out her complaint. On her return, her trusty old nurse and guardian, named Luckard, tells her she has been placing cards for her, and knows evil has befallen her. A very striking incident here is the outpouring of Wally's bitter reproaches to the image of the Holy Mother and to the crucifix, which meet her eye as she lies exhausted with grief in her room.

Was she to pour out her complaint to these? No! the Mother of God did not feel kindly towards her, else she wouldn't have spoiled for her her confirmation day before all others. She didn't know though what such love-pain meant, for she had only known pain for her Son, and that was something quite different from what she felt. And the Lord Jesus He didn't trouble Himself about love affairs—she darst not go to Him with such a matter. He wished us to be for ever striving after the kingdom of heaven. Ah! and her whole young loud-beating heart strained and pressed with every pulse-beat towards the dear fondly loved mandown here on the earth.

Equally impressive is another phrase introduced into this lyrical melody by the advent of the adopted vulture at her window.

She opened the little casement, and he slipped in and gazed at her trustingly with his yellow eyes. She gently scratched his neck and played with his strong wings, now unfolding them, now shutting them. A cool current of air stole through the open window. The sun stood by this time deeper behind the mountains; the narrow window-frame enclosed the peaceful picture of the mountain-tops veiled in blue mist. In her, too, it grew more restful. The evening air enlivened her spirit; she took the bird on her shoulder. "Come Hansl," said she, "we will do as though there were no work in the world." The trusty creature had brought her a wonderful consolation. She herself had fetched it thence, where no human being had ventured to go, from the precipitous cliff; she had won it from its mother by a life-and-

death struggle, had tamed it, and it belonged to her now wholly. "And he will also belong to me one day," an inner voice said to her as she pressed the bird to herself.

Wally's life now rapidly grew harder. Her father, determined to break her newly asserted will, bade her marry a certain Vincenz. Wally refused, and when threatened by her father with "a bitter end" between them, retorted that this end had already been reached a year ago, when he struck her to the ground. "I have no more heart for you," she cried; "you are just as dear to me as the Similaun or Murzoll glacier." The infuriated old man with difficulty restrained himself from brutally murdering his indomitable child, and resolved to send her to stay with that Similaun and that Murzoll with which she had ranked him in her love.

Up on the far-off dreary heights of the Hoch Joch, where vegetation scarcely reaches, and where only a few miserable goatherds occasionally seek a scanty sustenance for their flocks, there must Wally live through the long summer months, with a dirty hut for shelter, and the awful speechless snow peaks and ice torrents for her companions. The faithful Luckard escorts her halfway, and then she is left alone with her inseparable vulture. We must refer the reader to the original for a wonderful description of the glittering, majestic, yet dreary scenery which now opens up to the eyes of the young outcast. So, too, we must content ourselves with simply alluding to Wally's fantastic yet terrible dream, in which she sees Father Murzoll with his mighty face of stone, his hair of snow-whitened pines, his eyes of ice, his beard of moss, as well as his daughters, the mythical Blessed Virgins, the protectresses of the chamois, who seek to make her one of themselves, on condition that she renounces Joseph, the chamois hunter. This dream is conceived with a truly German wealth of quaint animistic fancy, and is a really wonderful conception. And in a fashion the dream is half fulfilled. Of a sudden, when gazing into the night-enfolded scene, she feels as though she must perish amid these wide invisible spaces, and, as though to help herself, climbs up against the rocky wall, and presses the anxiously beating heart against the cold stone. "The stone seemed to exert a mysterious power over her, for she grew hard and rough, as though in truth she were the child of Murzoll."

At length the cold autumn nights approach, and compel the obdurate father to send for his exiled child. She is not to live in his house unless she consents to wed Vincenz. On her way down, the messenger who fetches her tells her of changes in the farm: how Vincenz has acquired supreme influence over the father, who is a good deal shut in by bodily infirmity; how he has made great changes in the management of the farm, and, among other things, has sent away the faithful old Luckard, on the pretext that she is aiding Wally in her rebellion. Wally's bitter hostility now assumes a new and nobler form—it becomes chivalrous, altruistic. After hastening to Luckard's home, and finding that the faithful servant and friend had succumbed under the cruel shame, Wally moves on in a white heat of rage towards her father's house.

The first thing which Wally encounters on her return home is the insolence of a new kitchen maid, who laughs disdainfully at the commands of her self-appointed mistress. Restraining herself, Wally passes out into the court, and there finds an old and faithful servant of the family wearily splitting wood. She gathers from him that Vincenz has laid this heavy task on his shoulders, and bravely she bids the old man be seated while she continues his toil. Meanwhile Vincenz returns, finds the man seated, and begins to rail at him for his idleness. He has just taken up a cudgel for the purpose of still further torturing the old retainer, when he himself receives a blow on the head, and staggers senseless to the ground. Wally stands above him inflamed, incontinent, in the full rush of long-repressed active impulse. A scene follows which for splendid tragic effect it would be difficult to surpass, and which may well be studied by those who would discern between the thrilling power which lies in the natural order of events and the empty "sensational" force of unnatural combinations. The rumour of Wally's deed soon fills the court. The decrepit father himself stands before her, and bids the men seize and bind her. But in vain. The untamed spirit, which has drunk in deeper draughts of defiance in her months of free, unchecked wandering amid remote Alp-heights, will not so readily part with her freedom. She rushes into the kitchen, seizes a firebrand, and dares the men to come near. The father, growing more infuriated, orders the fire to be extinguished. Wally is now at the very threshold of despair. A terrible thought flashes through her mind, and rushes instantaneously forth into open action. Taking a fresh flaming brand from the hearth she clears her way into the yard, and, before the spectators have time to understand her intention, sets fire to a barn filled with straw and hay. In the tumultuous confusion which ensues she escapes, and in a distant refuge amid the rocks watches with strange mingled feelings the red glare which publishes far and wide her impious yet unavoidable act.

The story then takes us to Heiligkreuz, a picturesque village in the valley, to the house of the curé. To this place she comes in despair of other aid, relying on the higher Christian benevolence of a priest. The interview with this man, who combines with a simple and fervent faith clear insight into human character, and a shrewd understanding of the ways of the world, is charmingly told.* Very characteristic is the effect on Wally's mind of the neat, pretty room, with its simple ornaments and its suggestions of a life of refinement, to which she was a stranger. Wally ingeniously urges many argumentative difficulties as the pious man seeks to enforce on her the lessons of Christian endurance, though she finally promises to carry out his counsels.

* It looks as though Heiligkreuz had been blest with a line of worthy and serviceable curés. The present writer cannot here refrain from paying a warm tribute to the excellent qualities of the representative of the line, who some eight years ago assiduously nursed the narrator when overtaken by a dangerous illness under the curé's roof.

With recommendations from the priest, Wally wanders from village to village seeking a servant's place. But the vulture, from which she would not separate, is an insuperable obstacle in her way. Despairing of her object, and worn out with fatigue and exposure, she takes her resort to the rude home of some peasants named Klotz, who dwell far up towards the Hoch Joch, and who had a special right of asylum for outcasts. The narrative of her sojourn here through the winter months, where she was taken in almost lifeless out of sheer pity, and where she managed, much against her inclination, to draw upon herself the love of two of the sturdy brothers, is touching and quaint in a high degree, but cannot be dwelt on here.

With the first signs of spring Wally, who knows of the brothers' rival affection, is naturally impatient to be gone, and, as soon as the path is barely passable, returns to her lonesome abode on the Hoch Joch, where she is now commanded by her father to pass all her summers. Here she has, as before, only her vulture and her goats for companions. One day, as a terrible hail-and-thunder storm is pelting down, and Wally is seeking a stray kid, she hears a voice appealing for help; and the girl, who has not trembled before the fury of the hurricane and of the thunder, now shakes with agitation. "A human voice—now—here alone with her in this fearful uproar of nature, in this chaos!" Through the mist she recognises the stately form of Joseph, bearing in his arms the seemingly lifeless body of a maiden. It was another pregnant moment in this weary, long-suffering life.

In the hut where they seek to restore the insensible girl, Wally makes an effort to come nearer to her secretly worshipped Saint George, but in vain. Still sharper anguish is prepared for the stout brave heart. Joseph is indifferent, cold, and even repellent, and taunts her with allusions to her wild undutiful conduct. Wally, who cannot bear this treatment at the hands of him for whose sake she has suffered all, asks in bitterness whether he knows why she has struck down Vincenz and set fire to the barn and when asked to explain, exclaims in bitterness, "Must I tell thee—thee?" The girl, Afra by name, meanwhile recovers, hears that she is in the house of the dreaded Vulture Wally, and urges Joseph to set out again. Wally, growing more bitter, with the view apparently of gently alarming this "chicken-hearted" girl, proves to her that she is none other than the Vulture Wally by summoning her bird into the hut. Joseph's sportsman's eye cannot but look greedily at the noble quarry, and he playfully excites the bird. The vulture, which instinctively fears the hunter, bristles up, and, rising to the roof, swoops down on Joseph with terrible force. A fierce conflict ensues; Joseph is cruelly torn by claws and beak, and the bird is only prevented from doing further mischief by Wally, who manages to throw a cloth over it, and so to bind its legs. Joseph is now beside himself with passion. He commands Wally to let the bird loose that he may shoot it, and grinds his teeth in vexation as she persistently refuses, appealing to his honour as well as to his mercy. The visitors

who have thus suddenly invaded Wally's solitude then retire. Wally's breaking heart makes one last effort to soothe and reconcile the incensed Joseph, but in vain. The long-revered knight whose coming brought a glory into her rude shanty has departed, hopelessly estranged. Well may she in her grief, and in the new and keener sense of her desertion, turn to her unconscious bird and exclaim, "O Hans! Hans! what hast thou done to me?"

Another year has passed. Wally is again on the bleak, drizzling heights, more sorrowful, more desolate than ever, but not a whit less obstinate. At length, on a bright sunny day, after long storm and darkness, when Wally cannot help feeling glad at the sight of Nature's new gladness, the message of deliverance comes. A man arrives from the ancestral farm, announcing the death of her father, and bidding her return to take the honourable duties of farm mistress. Very finely does the writer describe Wally's demeanour at bidding farewell to her harsh yet now familiar and half-loved dwelling-place amid the snowy cloud-encircled peaks, and her feeling on bending over the body of her dead father. "She stood tearless there. She could have wept over the glorified father who had stripped off the earthly veil; but before the earthly veil itself, which with plump fist had marred her and her life, which had beaten her and trodden on her, she poured out no tear, she was as though made of stone."

Wally's behaviour in her new and unwonted situation is, as one might have anticipated, eccentric and bewildering to all about her. She has lost all fitness to deal with her fellow-men, and, through her fierce wilfulness, sets her own dependants against her. Then, too, she begins to deck herself in extravagant ornament, so that her beauty becomes dazzling, and all the finest youths of the neighbourhood come to woo her. Vincenz, the long-rejected suitor, renews his entreaties, and proves a depth of passionate desire quite unsuspected by Wally. But all this flattering attention is unpalatable to her. The one object of her thoughts keeps at a cruel distance. Wally hears that he is making love to Afra, the girl whom he once brought to her mountain hut. Afra is a sort of bar-maid at an inn in a neighbouring village. Jealousy now adds its pangs to poor Wally's load of anguish, and she conceives a fierce ungoverned hate for the simple gentle maid. This feeling soon has an occasion for expressing itself. On a gala day of the Church she repairs in rich attire to the neighbouring village, hoping to see Joseph in the crowd of holiday folk. Instead of this she encounters Afra, and takes the first opportunity of insulting her by all kinds of cruel and unprovoked taunts. The peasant-mistress has a perfect right thus to tread under foot the lowly servant, and the rough spectators of the scene shout in exultation at her unworthy triumph. It shows the high artistic skill of the novelist that even this repulsive cruelty does not estrange us from the much-persecuted Wally. We feel even here the perfect naturalness of her conduct, and can see how closely it is connected with that terribly severe pressure under which her heart had so long strained.

Can this stubborn nature ever be bent? Can the rough wood, to use the curé's image, ever be cut through and shaped into a perfect form? It is plain that Wally's fierce temper will never succumb to external pressure. One way, and only one, suggests itself. Her stormy passion must break out into some mad action, and so inflict a sharp wound on those tender girlish instincts which we can ever dimly discern beneath the fiery surface of her nature. Through some exquisite keen pain inflicted on these tender moral half-hidden susceptibilities will the true *katharsis* be found.

The series of events by which this end is brought about is a fine conception in imaginative literature, and is narrated with an intense self-restrained power of graphic narration which half reminds one of some vivid passages in Victor Hugo. The keen torture is cruelly prepared for the unconscious victim in the shape of a sweet delusive hope. Joseph sends a messenger to her, inviting her to accompany him to a village dance, and so indicates his intention to marry her. It reaches her just as the importunate Vincenz is urging his hopeless suit with the threat that he will dispossess her of her farm and lands, her father having left him a paper bequeathing them to himself. Wally is strangely changed by this unlooked-for happiness.

Who now recognised the gloomy, the bitter Vulture Wally in this maiden, glorified by happiness, who moved about as though borne on invisible wings? It had only needed this single sunbeam to make the blossoms, beaten by hail and killed by frost, spring again.

Wally goes, full of a radiant joy, to meet her lover knight. The dance commences. Joseph, before all the guests, claims the kiss which no other youth has succeeded in winning, and as the ardent maiden, struggling against pride, is ready to bestow it, inflicts the first blow by rebuking her forwardness, and reminds her that he only cares for a kiss won after a stubborn resistance. Wally is hotly indignant, and a desperate struggle follows. Joseph fails to wrest the coveted pledge from the stalwart girl, and at last the force of love again prevailing, Wally gives up the struggle, and throws herself into Joseph's arms, exclaiming, "There, thou hast me!" He calls on all the guests to witness the kiss, and as the conquered Wally sinks trustfully on his breast, repulses her, telling her his one object of cowing her, in revenge for her cruelty to Afra, is now fulfilled. The rough social sentiment again comes in, applauding Joseph and overwhelming Wally with jeering taunts. When she is left alone and desolate, Vincenz and Benedict Klotz, the faithful lover under whose roof she once sheltered, approach her with comforting words, the former bidding her name her own form of revenge. In a moment of irrestrainable madness she tells him that nothing but Joseph's death can now appease her. He who will bear her insulter's dead body to the feet of his darling Afra shall be her husband.

As soon as the wicked words have passed her lips she begins to repent. But their effect cannot be recalled. Vincenz has hastened forth in the night to slay his hated rival, meets him near the precipice above the Ache, and failing to hit him after two shots, pushes him over the edge of the precipice into the black abyss beneath. Wally, on learning what is

done, is transported by a fury of grief. She drags Vincenz to the edge of the narrow ravine, and is about to force him to leap with her into the foaming torrent, when she is arrested by a faint cry of "Help!" from below, answering a cry from the lips of the terrified Vincenz. The tempest of mad grief is suddenly lulled. Joseph lives in momentary peril of death, and all her energetic nature now rushes to the one end of saving him. The villagers are roused, cords are rudely strung together, and Wally insists on being lowered into the dark mist-enfolded abyss.

All stared with horror after her, as she sank deeper into the sea of mist, until it had swallowed her up and closed over her, perhaps never to be seen again. The stiff stretched cord alone gave information of the movements of the death-defying diver in this sea of cloud, and all eyes were fixed on it, watching whether it would break or whether it would hold her. And as often as one of the roughly fastened knots was paid out, every heart beat more loudly at the thought, "will it hold?" And on the foreheads of the men forming the chain of cord-holders the sweat came in pearly drops, and involuntarily they felt each new knot as it slipped through their hands. . . . Presently the last of the chain exclaims, "It is just paid out; it will not reach to the bottom!" "Jesus and Mary, stand by us!" shout all to one another, "it won't reach!" . . . But there, there, the cord suddenly slackens—a fearful moment! Has it parted, or has its burden found bottom? The women pray aloud, the children cry. The men begin slowly to wind up again, but after a few lengths have been drawn in, the cord resists again. It is not cut—it holds; Wally has found footing. And now, hark; a faint shout out of the depth, and out of all throats breaks forth, still vibrating with anxiety, the answer. The cord becomes slack once more, then tight, and so on. Wally is clambering up the side of the cliff. . . . Now the cord takes an oblique direction, so that the men have to pass from the left to the right side of the bridge. Wally seems to be for ever climbing higher, and they have to wind up continually. "God be praised," said some, "he cannot have fallen so deep; if he lies so high up he may still live!" "Perhaps she is only searching for him," others thought. Now a tug at the cord, then a sudden slackening, and a cry that shot through one's very marrow. "It has parted!" shrieked the people. No, it stretches itself again; perhaps it was a cry of joy, perhaps she has found him! The women sink on their knees, even the men pray; for though they had all hated the haughty peasant mistress, everyone who bore a human heart in his breast trembles for the self-sacrificing maid who swings down there in the chaos in jeopardy of her life.

And she does prevail, and saves her much-loved, much-wronged Joseph. As she sees him, pale and bruised and seemingly lifeless, lying in her own chamber, all her harsh rude spirit melts away, and she becomes sweet, docile, and enduring, so that the curé, who comes to her in consequence of a confession of all by Vincenz, can scarcely believe he is looking on the once fierce indomitable Vulture Wally. When the surgeon arrives, and pronounces none of Joseph's wounds to be mortal, Wally resolves to renounce him for ever.

She felt as though she dare not now touch one of his fingers. Had he lain there dead or dying, she would have covered him with kisses, just as she had done before, then, when she believed him to be lost. The dead had belonged to her, but she had no claim on the living. Thus he had died to her in the moment in which the surgeon said he would live, and she buried him with love's anguish in her heart, while she received the message of his resurrection as a redemption.

The strength of her resolution was soon put to the proof. Afra comes

rushing in full of wild grief, and throws herself in a passionate outburst upon Joseph's breast. Wally sees her duty, resolves to leave Afra in possession, and to retire once more to Father Murzoll. The curé is well content, for he knows that whithersoever she goes now, it will be "back to her Father."

Once more, then, the laden yet chastened and softened heart has to bear the drear isolation of those cold mountain regions. Her one thought now is of the sweet rest which is to follow this slow life of unshared suffering; and though she feels it would be wicked to hasten the longed-for end by an act of violence, she fancies herself justified in gently "helping" the heavenly Father to release her, by fasting and self-exposure, so as to bring under that mighty stalwart body of hers. Not so, Wally! Thy many cruel wrongs and thy terrible chastisement call for some other end, some sweet quiet nook of this earthly life, the brightness of which would be but enhanced by the shadow of a memory of woe, and in which nascent noble impulses should find scope for ripening into beauteous works. The love for which she has yearned so long, and the desire of which has cost her so much, shines forth at length softly and deliciously on her weary eyes. Joseph comes to fetch her down, to assure her of the love which he has long felt and struggled to hide, of his sorrow for the cruel injury, and of his forgiveness for the counter wrong. The strange delicious reality gradually shapes itself into distinct form to Wally's mind. The meek, gentle Afra who has awakened such a cruel jealousy in her bosom is Joseph's sister, whom the dying mother entrusted to him, with the prayer that he should hide the fact of their relationship from the world. Joseph had been repelled by Wally's ungirlish wildness, but yet more powerfully drawn by her beauty, her bravery, and the depth of tender love which has gradually opened up to his view.

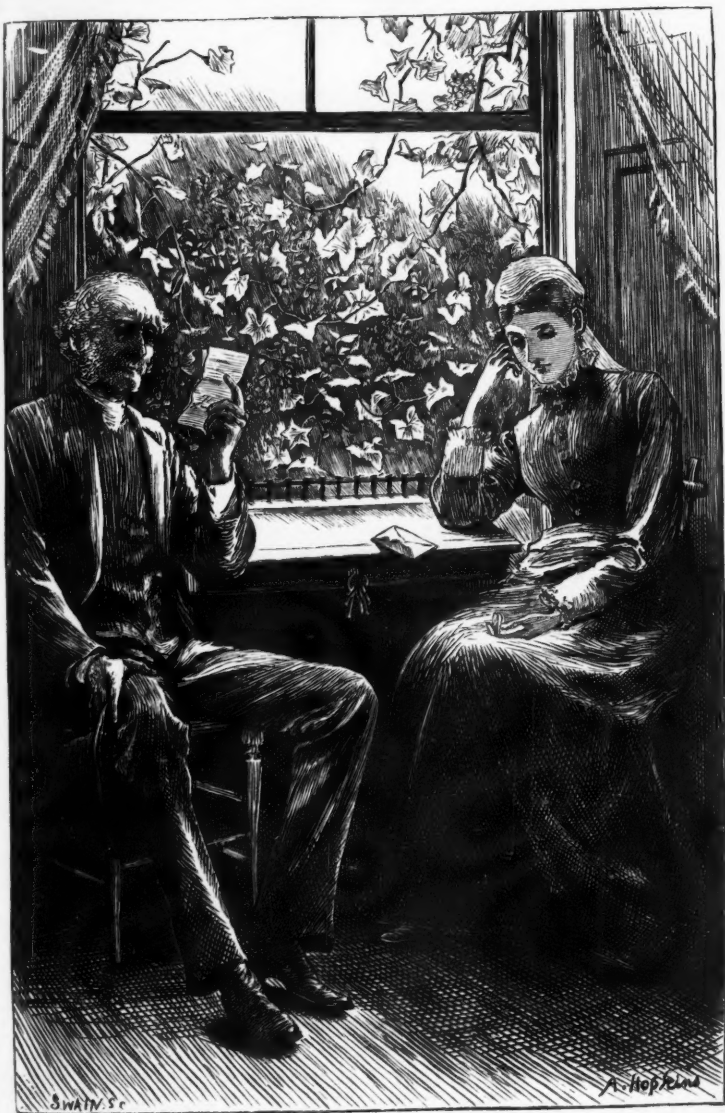
Thus closes harmoniously this almost lyrical romance. The harsh-rending conflicts, the deep, unutterable anguish, peacefully subside into a still content. Even to the last page the artist hand, with consummate skill, prolongs, in just perceptible under-tone, the dominant minor strain.

Wally and Joseph died early, but their name lives on, praised far and wide, so far and so long as the Ache rushes downwards. The traveller who goes late in the evening through the ravine sees, perhaps, when the bell sounds its evening blessing, and the silver sickle of the moon stands above the mountains, an aged pair kneeling above yonder, on the Sonnenplatte. It is Afra and Benedict Klotz, who often come over from Rofen, to pray by the cross which has been erected by the village community to their benefactors the Vulture Wally and the Bear Joseph. Wally herself had brought their hearts together, and they bless her memory even to-day at the edge of the grave.

It would be easy to urge against this story two objections, such as one frequently sees brought against this department of German fiction. Does not Wally's history, says the facile critic, distinctly teach the immoral doctrine that headstrong defiance of appointed social conditions will succeed in its object? Now, neglecting to ask whether this is a legiti-

mate way of applying a moral standard to fiction, we will content ourselves with pointing out that Wally's "success" does not come in obedience to her froward defiance, but as an unsought reward of gentleness and quiet endurance after ample atonement for the earlier ferocity. If some moral truth is to be deduced from every good story, the history of Vulture Wally will be found to yield one too.

Again, a superficial judge may pronounce Wally's character to be too uncouth and abnormal. He will, perhaps, argue that such absorbing devotion to one quite unknown and unconnected, and such fierce defiance in social expulsion and awful solitude, do not belong to healthy human, not to say womanly, nature, as it is moulded by modern social influences. To this it may be enough to reply, that the writer's object is clearly not to depict human nature in its conventional forms. But apart from this, may it not be said that the human nature of this Tyrolese valley and the human nature of our English towns are much more alike than a momentary glance would suggest? A little reflection will, we think, show that a novel which describes familiar English character and life owes more than half of its interest to just such mighty forces of individual character as displayed themselves in Wally's rude environment in so fierce and appalling a shape, but which, amid our regular social conditions, lurk but dimly perceived as mere potentialities, forces in equilibrium, whose action is none the less real because it does not result in visible motion. Finally, we would contend against such an objector, that Wally's nature is fundamentally normal and good, that her deepest instincts are social, womanly, and tender, and that it is this fact which gives the exquisite minor music to the story, and makes the narrative of her conflict, defeat, and final reward so completely satisfying.



"THAT IS FROM MY BROTHER-IN-LAW," SHE SAID, "A'D NOW YOU KNOW ALL."



friends till they had quarrelled with her and among themselves for sole possession and exclusive claims.

"But Leam was not natural," they said one to the other. "How should she be, when she wore a high comb and mantilla, never came to church, and spoke Spanish more fluently than English?"

To these good creatures of kind hearts and narrow brains, conformity to English middle-class modes of life was the only naturalness worthy of the name; and all which was not conformity therewith was either false or wrong.

There was one thing however, which all repeated, each in her own terms, and which Leam did accept; this was, that she must not grieve too much, for that mamma was not really dead; her body only had died, while the soul, the real mamma, was in a better world whence she could see her dear little Leam and watch over her. So Leam was not to cry; mamma was so much happier where she was than she had been on earth it would be selfish to wish her back; and it would make her unhappy if she saw her little daughter fretting for her. Besides, it was wicked to fret. It had been God's will that she should go, and Leam must be resigned and not repine.

Most of us know from early years the unreal consolations offered by orthodoxy to those who grieve for the loss of their dearest; and the familiarity of youth induces the questioning of maturity. But all this was new to Leam, and she accepted the first part of it as the absolute truth unsoftened by spiritual explanation or modifying paraphrase. Henceforth it was the fact that ruled her life;—mamma was alive in heaven and knew all that was going on at home. Thus she had another weapon of defence against innovation, and another reason why she should maintain intact that tenacious loyalty to her mother's love and teaching, which admitted no rival and as little voluntary change.

But resolve as she might, Leam's strength had gone from her, and the Philistines were upon her. The manner of life led with her mother came to an end, and her father, acting under the collective advice of the ladies, but mainly influenced by Madame, took her in hand immediately after the funeral, determined on making her an English girl, body and soul, and to wipe away the past as though it had never been.

Not meaning to be harsh, yet harsh all the same, he began the war by telling her that things were changed now, and that she must acknowledge the new régime by frankly abandoning her bad habits and absurd affectations. He would have no more of them, and they must be given up.

"What bad habits? what affectations, papa?" asked Leam superbly, thinking to carry all before her as her mother had hitherto done, and she also, borne along in the maternal skirts.

"Your ridiculous dress, to begin with," said Mr. Dundas. "Your hair shall no longer be done in that absurd style, but simply and plainly like an English lady's; and I will have no more mantillas and combs. You must wear what I have ordered to be taken to your room instead."

This was a jaunty little hat made in the current mode and sent from London by Madame's orders.

"That thing in my room? I will not wear it!" said Leam with a disdainful gesture.

"I think you will," replied her father slowly.

It was on a Sunday morning, and in the breakfast-room, when this conversation, which was the initial act of the contest that had to come between them, took place; the Sunday after the funeral, on which day Mr. Dundas had decided that Leam should go to church with him, dressed as an English girl should be, and with no more of this offensive difference of nationality or religion about her.

And it may as well be said here, that breakfasting with her father at all was an unwelcome novelty to the girl. During her mother's lifetime she had had her meals with her apart. They had lived on garlic and oil, gazpacho and other un-English messes, which Mr. Dundas disdained as much as Pepita disdained roast beef and plum-pudding, and which they had had served up anyhow and at all hours, just when wanted. So, partly by contrariety of temper and because it annoyed Dundas, partly because of her dislike to fixed times and formal service, and in a degree because of the character of her food, Pepita had abandoned the dining-room and family meals, keeping Leam with her as her table companion; hence the child had never known what it was to eat with her father, and in her heart resented the indignity which she held to be included in the innovation.

She was leaving the room after she had delivered herself of her refusal, but her father's voice stopped her. She faced him, fixing her eyes on him steadily.

"How like her mother!" he thought, meeting her eyes full of that tragic expression which seemed wavering between tears and wrath, hysterics and Alexandrines.

"There is no use in defying me, Leam!" said Mr. Dundas hastily. "You have to submit to me now, and—understand me—you *shall* submit! You shall wear the dress that has been provided for you, and you shall come to church with me to-day."

Still Leam did not speak nor remove her eyes from their steady gaze on her father's flushing face. But though she was as rigid as if cut out of stone, yet her attitude and bearing were defying and contemptuous, and irritated Sebastian almost as much as his wife's coarse violence used to irritate him; while they baffled him even more.

"You shall submit," he repeated again, shifting some plates and knives noisily, as a mechanical relief to his feelings.

Then said Leam, in Spanish, with a certain fiery concentration more expressive than the most passionate eloquence,

"Am I not mamma's daughter, papa? It is wrong to make me do what she does not like."

"It is not," answered Mr. Dundas. "Your mother was not a fit

guide for you. She was the worst you could have had ; and you are to be in better hands now. And do not speak to me in that cursed jargon, Leam ! You are an English girl, not a Spaniard ; speak English then, or do not speak at all. Now go and make yourself fit for church. The bells are ringing."

"Papa !" cried Leam with an imploring accent, but one full of pride ; "this is affronting mamma !"

"Don't talk nonsense—go," returned her father angrily.

"To the heretic Protestant church in an English hat ?—I am a Catholic and a Spaniard !" cried Leam haughtily, first crossing herself and then making her mother's favourite sign of abhorrence.

Mr. Dundas took her by the arm, somewhat too roughly.

"Hear me once for all, Leam," he said in slow distinct tones ; "you are neither a Catholic nor a Spaniard ; you are a Protestant and an English woman. While your mother lived I did not interfere with you ; you were her child, not mine. But now that she has gone and I am responsible for you, I will have you what I wish you to be. If you will not obey me quietly, you shall by force. My mind is made up ; and you ought to know by now what that means. All the people here are aware of what I intend to do—bring you to church to-day, dressed like one of themselves ; if you make a scene, and have to be taken by force, the shame will be on your own head. Nothing shall make me waver one inch from the line I have marked down. You have the choice between the dignity of voluntary submission—if that phrase suits your inordinate pride and vanity—and the disgrace of being publicly made to submit. Take your own way. Whichever you do take will lead to the same thing in the end."

Leam, who had listened quietly enough while he spoke, now tore his hand with contemptuous anger from her arm, and covered her face. It was a trial to her, greater in its way than any she had ever encountered. That her father, whom she had been taught to despise, to flout, to regard as something infinitely beneath her mother and herself, should now have her in his grasp and be able to force her into submission—what an indignity ! what an insult through her to her mother ! But she had the strength if also the weakness which belongs to pride, and as she became convinced that there was no help for it and that she must submit, as her father said, she preferred the method which brought the least amount of public shame with it. Recognising the fact of defeat, she was wise enough not to proclaim her struggle, and after a few moments' contest with herself, she lifted her tearless face and said, coldly ;

"I will obey you, papa."

But she held her proud head as high as before.

"You are a good girl," said her father more kindly than he had yet spoken.

"No," flashed Leam, "I am not good ; it is you who are bad and cruel !"

"Then I need not thank you? need not be pleased with you?" he returned in a half bantering way.

"Pleased with me? *you*?" she answered, her whole heart of scorn in her voice. Shaking her forefinger backward, she added, "I am mamma's daughter. What have I to do with you, or you with me?"

"You will soon see," returned Mr. Dundas angrily. "Unfortunately for me, I am your father, and have to do with a very silly and undutiful daughter. Now go upstairs and dress, and behave, if you can, like a reasonable creature and not like an imbecile—as I sometimes think you are. Your absurdities are as fatiguing as they are ridiculous."

"And yours fatigue me as they did mamma," said Leam, as she left the room with her head still held high, but crying in her heart, "Oh, mamma, why did you leave me! Holy Virgin, why do you not protect her and me!"

Thus the first contest was got over, and that with less difficulty than Mr. Dundas had anticipated. For the sentiment underlying, that might pass for the present; what was most valuable at this moment was the fact.

Quiet, undemonstrative, as unmoved as if it had been a thing of daily habit, Leam walked by her father's side into the church, where her presence, "clothed and in her right mind," as Adelaide Birkett said, created more excitement than if she had been a princess at the very least. A supernatural creature in human attire—the Dunaston ghost itself—could not have caused a greater stir in the congregation than did this young melancholy girl as she glided noiselessly after her father up the middle aisle, like one in a dream rather than awake, but as imperturbable in gesture as she was miserable in face.

Certainly she scandalised the watching congregation by not following the prescribed attitudes, and by not knowing her place in the prayer-book, the offer of which she at first coldly refused, and when her father thrust it angrily into her hands, held on her lap at the same opening, and never even feigned to read. She sat all through the service, her mournful eyes fixed on the floor, mentally repeating aves and paternosters as exorcisms against the sin in which she was engaged; for was she not taking part in the ritual of heretics, hence offending the saints and gratifying the Evil One with every prayer that was repeated, every hymn that was sung?

When Mr. Birkett mounted the pulpit-stairs, with his slow and showy step, she remembered the time when her mother had hanged the cat, crying "Preach, Birkett, preach!" and closed her ears against his sermon as if it had been a litany of witches. As the military-minded rector preached discourses of that dry kind which are just so much professional obligation worked off with the least expenditure of mental force possible, perhaps she did not lose much.

The worst of the day's ordeal was when the Families congregated under the church porch for the friendly gossip which was as much part

of the Sunday service at North Aston as the Litany or the Collect for the day. Feeling as Leam did, humiliated and ridiculous, that symbolic hat of hers the badge of her degradation and the sign of her despair, the eulogistic glances and approving words of the ladies were as so many insults to herself and her mother's memory, additional drops of the bitterness with which her cup was filled. Every one said something kind, for every one understood the meaning of her appearance there; and all wanted to make it a kind of public admission into their order, a minor office of social baptism, wherein she was to be greatly caressed and feted, as tame elephants caress and cajole the wild ones.

But their kindest words fell dead on unresponsive Leam. When Mrs. Birkett, dear soul, said with every good intention:—

"Well, Leam, my dear, what did you think of our beautiful service? Did you not like it and feel it go to your heart?"—Leam answered as her mother might have done: "I did not listen; and what I heard was ugly and stupid."

When Mrs. Corfield bustled up to her and grasped her slender arms in her tight little hands, saying, "I am so glad to see you here, Leam, my dear! How nice you look in that hat! You are quite a different creature now, and really as good as any of them!"—Leam looked at her with tragic disgust, then for the second time to-day released her arms and turned away, saying, "And I am not glad. You hurt me."

To Mrs. Fairbairn, whose fresh round face dimpled all over with smiles as she shook hands with her warmly and panted cordially, "How nice this is!"—Leam answered coldly, "Why do you laugh?" and stood waiting for her answer with a serious simplicity that disconcerted the pleasant-tempered woman as she never thought she could be disconcerted by a child.

Madame said nothing. She had more tact and discrimination than the North Astonians, and understood too clearly what the girl felt to congratulate her on her sorrow. She had it at heart to tame Leam, to make her love her, to bind her fast with cords of gratitude for a sympathy she could not find elsewhere. Not being a person of fixed ideas or resolute principles, she intended to make Leam feel that she was her understanding friend, comprehending and regretting her misfortune. All the same, she chose her hats, advised Mr. Dundas to bring her to church and make her leave off talking Spanish, and urged him to obliterate every trace of the bad past as speedily as might be, leaving the way clear for the better future which she would direct. At the present moment however, she contented herself by simply pressing Leam's hand with that kind of secret affectionateness which is like a whisper of love between two people who are forced to keep an undemonstrative face to the world.

For which Leam was grateful, in spite of herself. It touched her, in the midst of so many loud-voiced congratulations. Had she been any other than Madame de Montfort the girl's heart would have yielded on the spot; but she thought of her mother's persistent dislike even while

she had haunted her, and her little hand lay limp in the soft grasp which said as plainly as words, "Dear child, I feel with you!"

Alick, too, forbore to congratulate. No one was so glad as he to see his pomegranate bud take on itself the habits of an English rose; but if he was glad for himself he was grieved for her, enlightened as he was by his power of comprehension and that odd idealising habit of mind which rounded off all he saw.

The healing and understanding spirit which speaks without words looked out from his honest eyes as he met hers, searching for a friend and conscious now that she had found what she sought. As indifferent to appearances as to persons, the girl drew back a few steps till she came side by side with him. Then she held out her hand, her serious face lifted up to his.

"You are good," she said gravely. "You do not hurt and you do not laugh. You may talk to me."

On which, turning her back abruptly to the rest and still holding Alick's hand in hers, she walked down the churchyard swiftly, saying as she went, "Let us get away from them. Mamma hated them all and so do I."

"Ah, but we must not hate, señorita!" said Alick very gently. "It is wrong to hate, and just coming out of church too! God Himself is love!" he added reverently.

"Oh, no, He is not!" said Leam. "God and the saints gave mamma to papa, and now they have given me to him and taken her away. No, God is not love; or at least," she added in a plaintive voice, turning to Alick with a pathetic look of injury and ill-treatment, "He does not love me though I do not deserve it from Him. I never did Him or the saints any harm!"

What could be said to such an uncompromising bit of anthropomorphism as this? Alick's simple theology was scarcely up to the mark against unorthodoxy of such a bold unusual strain. All he could do was to look down on her kindly, wish that his mother would talk to her, and say in a soothing voice:

"Some day, señorita, the dark things will be made clear, and you will understand why you have been afflicted."

"All the same, it is cruel!" sighed Leam: "but," kindling, "I have not said my prayers since mamma died, till now in that ugly church of yours. I wanted them to know that I was angry; but I did not want them to think I was *there*," contemptuously, "of my own free will!"

"Oh, señorita, will you never be got to understand the truth!" cried Alick, filled with such infinite pity and tenderness for this erring young soul, he felt as if he could have turned monk for her sake if only he could have set her feet free from their misleading fetters.

"I do know the truth!" said Leam proudly. "Mamma was a Catholic; she knew what was good. It is you bad heretics who are wrong."

"No, no, we are right! Oh, how I wish you could think so!" pleaded Alick.

Leam looked at him with a strange mixture of sorrow and scorn.

"I am to think you right?" she said.

"Yes!" he replied fervently.

"And mamma wrong?"

He was silent.

"And mamma wrong?" she repeated solemnly. "And tell her that to her face, up there in heaven? And make her angry with me and unhappy? No," shaking her head, "she shall never have to complain to the saints that I am different now that I need not be afraid of her, and when she cannot beat me if I offend her. I will do what mamma likes more than ever now, because she is not here to make me. You may hold your tongues. You know nothing. Mamma knew everything. You are all bad but you; and you are good. But you are stupid."

Alick made no reply; and Leam having opened her mind so far was not disposed to open it further, so they walked on together in silence and the Families at their heels smiled furtively and took long jumps to conclusions.

CHAPTER XIV.

UNCHANGEABLE.

THE outposts of conformity carried, Leam was driven back on that inner citadel of self which cannot be taken against the will. Here she was safe. Her father might command her actions but he could not control her mind; he could not turn the current of her thoughts, which were ever with mamma—always mamma—nor quench either her love for that one beloved, or her hate for all the rest. To her own soul she was absolute, and Sebastian was soon made to feel there was a point where his authority failed, and whence she defied him successfully.

Not quarrelsome like her mother, not tempestuous in any way, but concentrated, dry, and infinitely disdainful, she was as impenetrable as Pepita had been, and as impossible to influence. Tenacious to the highest point she was of the nature of those creatures who suffer themselves to be hacked to pieces rather than lose their hold. Her hold was her loyalty to her mother dead as when living, and her determination not to be warped in mind from the teaching she had given her, whatever her necessity of action might be.

Whether her father was pleased or displeased in nowise touched her if she felt sure that mamma would have said she was right. Twice when he drew her to him, and kissed her with a sudden burst of feeling, the girl simply stared at him with those large eyes of hers, wiped her lips vigorously, and wondered why he should. It did not seem the right kind of thing to do anyhow—she was sure mamma would not have liked it—and a flush of mingled shame and anger shot like a flame over her pale face as she drew herself away with a look of injury and offence. He tried

this special form of paternal kindness, as was said, only twice; and then he gave up the attempt. But they did not get on together the better for his rebuff.

If he asked her to walk with him, Leam, to whom exercise was as strange as kissing, would obey him truly, but with the air of a slave hounded to her labour or of a victim preparing for her sacrifice. She never talked when they were out, and she knew nothing; having the air too of resenting all that was told her if it was what mamma had not known, and what she would have contradicted. She was the most uninteresting companion in the world to a man who liked to be amused with pleasant chit-chat, and found no pleasure in breaking up fallow ground; and when she had gone perhaps half a mile she would suddenly stand still in the middle of the road and say, "I am tired; I will go home," no matter what his object had been, whether Lionnet and Madame, or the Hill and Josephine Harrowby.

All this was very unsatisfactory, and by degrees her father's good intentions burnt themselves out, and he began to leave her to herself as in foregone times, which was just what Leam desired.

The ladies fared no better. When they came about her with their advice and exhortations she listened to them silently, stonily, her unvarying answer being, "No, I will not do that: mamma would not have liked it;" or more frequently, changing the tense, "Mamma would not like it."

What could be done with a girl with mournful eyes and an impassive manner, who looked like the Tragic Muse and quietly put by all that was proposed for her good on the plea that her mother would have disapproved? And what can you say to a daughter who has realised the life after death so vividly that her mother dead is the same to her as her mother living, only separated from sight by the gross veil of the flesh? They knew it was not common sense to take the thing so literally as Leam had done; but then spiritual formulas have no common sense in them when tested by the needs of everyday life; and so people find out when they meet with those uncomfortable logicians called fanatics. Respect for filial piety forbade them to tell her that this mother, the object of her faithful devotion, was little better than a savage, coarse of nature, foul of speech, and the worst enemy she could have had. Respect for the faith which has peopled heaven with souls in bliss, of whom all is said and nothing known, forbade them to ridicule her vivid realisation; while that fetish of English cult, conventional propriety, urged them to teach her that she must despise all she had hitherto revered, forget all she had been taught, and efface the idea of the spiritual mother's identity as a leading line of conduct; that is,—teach her that she must abandon filial fidelity for disloyal conformity. It was a difficult position; but as this same common sense is a mighty power in England, leading us to the hypocrisy of saying one thing and doing another, none of them meant to be beaten by a child's fanaticism, and all kept up the attack, whether they were repulsed or not.

"Poor Sebastian" was more than ever the object of feminine pity, the ladies wondering what he would do with that odd girl in the end, and lamenting the dreadful mess he had made of his life all through. He used to run distractedly from house to house, asking each kind soul to help him—though, to be sure, Madame was his central point, and the one to whom he always returned. But asking advice from the rest kept him on good terms with them, and gave him that thing for which he craved more than he craved for happiness—the sympathy of a small knot of women who thought what a dear fellow he was, and who felt their own eyes grow pitiful and tender when he lifted up his blue ones, purpled and moist with sorrow.

He went to them all in turn and all did what they could. Mrs. Birkett lent the child hideous square-stitched patterns, and set her up in wools and canvas; but though Leam despised her industry and refused to learn Berlin work, yet, the rector's wife being gentle and sweet-tempered as indolent people generally are, the girl did not stiffen herself against her personally. She even got to the length of once giving her hand a timid little press that meant as much as Carry Fairbairn's strongest epithet of endearment. But Leam and Adelaide were no more sympathetic than Adelaide and Pepita had been; and when the rector's pretty daughter used to lay down the law for the girl's guidance in terms as hard and fast as mountain bases, Leam simply turned to stone under her manipulation, and often provoked Adelaide to say tartly, when discussing her at the Hill:

"Well! horrible as Mrs. Dundas was, she was better than Leam! At least she was alive!"

"So I suspect you will find her daughter when the time comes," one day answered Frank Harrowby. "She has not such a pair of eyes in her head as to be always asleep, as she is now. I'll undertake to say she will some day startle you all!"

"I am sure I hope she will do nothing wrong!" said Mrs. Harrowby with a timid look.

On which Frank laughed, and said in reply: "Let us suppose it something heroic, mother. Perhaps unmask Madame."

"Oh, that Madame!" cried Mrs. Harrowby spitefully; "what a snake she is! Even Josephine is beginning to find her out."

Frank laughed.

"True, Joseph?" he asked, reading between the lines.

Josephine blushed a little tearfully.

"I don't think I like her so much as I did at first," she said as she spied Sebastian Dundas driving up the avenue, and felt sure that Madame had not been at home, else he would not have come here.

Of course he was on one of his usual errands, detailing the last new impracticability of his unfortunate Leam and beseeching Mrs. Harrowby to give him her assistance and advice.

The conclave sat in solemn council, and the upshot of their delibera-

tions was that Leam should be asked to go to the Hill on a visit, when the ladies would do what they could, and Josephine especially would charge herself with the difficult task of attempting her education.

It was all meant for kindness; but they could scarcely have devised a system of more torture for the girl. Mrs. Harrowby was a well-meaning woman, none more so; but she had that rigidity of age to which young people are antipathetic, and that hardness of propriety which cannot tolerate the mistakes of ignorance or the errors of excess. She would if she could have crushed all the inconvenient vitality out of youth; indeed she regarded youth as in itself a thing slightly improper, and wondered greatly at Providence for not growing the race mature. Moreover she was a woman who fought with windmills and lived with perpetual lions in the way; and her windmills never ceased to turn nor her lions to prowl.

When Leam went to the Hill on her visit, Mrs. Harrowby, taking her into her own room, gave her a long well-intentioned lecture on the need of wary walking, and the care she ought to take of her conduct. Her mind was full of that frank linking of hands with Alick Corfield, the Sunday before last at church, and she had suddenly encountered a lion in Leam's eyes, when she had seen her fix them on Frank with that earnest unwavering look of hers, which seemed full to the very brim of some tremendous emotion.

It was nothing of the kind. She was only trying to remember the English name of the stone in his scarf-pin. It was a turquoise, and she had forgotten it.

But as Mrs. Harrowby was a very proper woman, to whom spades was a word forbidden, she clothed her exhortation in such vaguely decorous language that the girl, used to her mother's uncompromising speech, did not know what she meant. Had she told her plainly that she was not to allow young men to make love to her, Leam would first have asked innocently: "Who is there here that should?" and would then have added haughtily, "And none but a Spaniard ever shall."

As it was, Mrs. Harrowby's periphrases went round her central thought without touching it, and all the good Leam brought away from the interview was a lesson in pronunciation, and the conviction that when her mother called Mrs. Harrowby "a prond old frog," or "a yellow old toad," as she generally did, she was justified.

This visit of Leam's to the Hill could scarcely be called a success. It was difficult to know what to do with a girl who sat absolutely idle through the day, with a melancholy face like a Grecian mask cut in stone, turning a pair of dumb, reproachful eyes from one to the other, like a dog enquiring of an enigmatic master; a girl who would not talk and who answered any questions that might be put to her only in monosyllables; who would not read, nor work, nor play croquet, nor laugh when others laughed, nor take any part whatsoever in the home-life; who always looked on the point of bursting into tears, or of pleading passion-

ately for mercy, and who could be neither caressed nor coerced into any sign of life whatsoever. It made Mrs. Harrowby so nervous, she said, to see her like this, she could not sit in the same room with her; and Maria, who was sharp-tempered, told her plainly one day that she made herself disagreeable to them all by her sullenness.

To which Leam, fixing her big eyes on the puckered face of her monitress, said coldly:

"Why do you not send me away then? I did not ask to come." Whereat Maria was very angry and scolded her severely.

Leam never understood why she was angry. She had no idea that she was offending against good manners by her straightforwardness or her stillness. She was just herself—nothing else—and her mind had not yet awakened to the necessity of making herself different from what she was by nature and habit for the sake of others. She was a Spaniard, and they were all inferior creatures—English, Protestants, pigs—in nowise her equals. All that they did and were, out of her own or rather her mother's groove, was wrong and silly, and she despised them for their very knowledge, as your true home-bred Turk despises the Giaours who dance with their own feet rather than hire slaves to dance for them. Her whole nature was encrusted with the pride and hatred taught by Pepita as a religion; and until this should be broken up no good could be done with her.

A few days settled that fact in Mrs. Harrowby's mind, and in Maria's and Fanny's; though Josephine was more hopeful, and begged for a fair trial. Frank, too, thought she might stay a little longer. He found her tragic face amusing and her earnest eyes promising. He took some trouble with her, and did his best to get up a mild flirtation that might stir the stagnant waters; but Leam did not like him. Ugly Alick Corfield was far more pleasant to her than this jaunty, dapper little man, who would talk to her when she wanted to be silent, and who never said what she cared to hear. So Frank lost his time; and when he fairly understood that fact, joined his mother in her view of the case, and advised the young person's immediate removal.

The only look of pleasure that had crossed Leam's face during the whole of this long week was when Mrs. Harrowby—quite worn out, as she told her daughters—said to her at breakfast; "Leam, I am going to take you home to-day."

Then Leam, lifting up her serious eyes, smiled faintly and said quietly, "I am glad."

"You are not very complimentary, my dear child," said the old lady with a satirical laugh.

"Nor grateful," put in Maria, crossly.

"Ought I to be grateful?" asked Leam, looking from one to the other. "Why?"

"Well, we need not discuss it," Mrs. Harrowby answered with an offended air. "If you do not feel what you have said, no talking can make you."

"I feel that I am glad, and I say that I am glad," repeated Leam in her quiet, wooden way.

"You are either one of the most heartless or one of the most brainless girls I ever met with in my life!" said Mrs. Harrowby. "It is perfectly dreadful to have anything to do with you."

"And you are a cross old woman," answered Leam disdainfully.

"Hold your tongue, Leam! How dare you be so impertinent to Mrs. Harrowby! I will tell your father what a naughty girl you have been," said Maria sharply; while Josephine quivered into tears, Frank laughed, Mrs. Harrowby looked injured, and Leam, not letting go her parable, said in the same stolid way as before to Maria, "And you are a cross old woman too."

Mr. Dundas was by no means rejoiced to receive his un congenial daughter returned so quickly on his hands. He had hoped to be rid of her for a month or two at the least; but Mrs. Harrowby said she was getting no good with them, and she had better go home before things came to an explosion. Sebastian ought to have a governess for her—a staid, respectable person contented with her profession, none of your flighty, novel-reading minxes with aspirations and possibilities of their own, but a middle-aged woman of responsible character, and not too showy exterior—a widow and not likely to marry again, and who understood discipline and breaking in.

Meanwhile, as Josephine had taken quite a fancy to the child, she might do what she could. If Sebastian liked to send her to the Hill, say three days a week, Josephine would make her study if she could, and do her best to open her mind. She did not promise much result, she said; for Leam was decidedly odd. When they were reading to her one of Scott's novels, the girl, who at first had been interested, asked suddenly: "Is this true?" and when they said, "No, this is not true, it is a novel," she positively refused to listen to another word, saying proudly: "I did not come here to listen to lies. Mamma did not tell lies." On another occasion, when they were reading her a bit of history which they thought would be sure to suit her fastidious taste, seeing that it was true and what had really happened, she put her hands over her ears, saying: "I will not hear of those bad men. Mamma did not tell me these bad stories."

She was such a strange child, Mrs. Harrowby said in self-justification of this unlooked-for return; there seemed to be no way whatever by which she might be touched. They could not make her happy nor fond of them, though they tried so hard to do both. However, they must not lose heart. Their only chance lay in the beneficent operation of time—when she should be older—and for the present they must content themselves with sowing seed for the future harvest.

But sowing seed is a tedious affair to amateur spiritual husbandmen. They dislike that long waiting necessary for the reaping, and want to plant the grain over-night and stack the sheaves the next morning.

Nevertheless, the thing had to be done. Leam's spiritual harvest was evidently one that would not be hurried, and the various husbandmen who busied themselves in the matter must learn patience and practise it—her father and the Harrowbys among the number.

CHAPTER XV.

LAYING THE LINES.

THERE was no doubt about it; since Pepita's death a secret coolness had sprung up between Madame de Montfort and Josephine Harrowby, which had not yet crystallized itself into words nor taken any palpable shape of accusation. Nevertheless it was there; and each was conscious of the fact, if Madame alone knew the cause.

When Leam went to stay at the Hill this coolness had increased, though to Mr. Dundas Madame had said how glad she was of the change for the dear child. It would do her good and bring her out. All the same she had resented the translation as a private grievance, and Josephine had resented her annoyance as unfriendly.

Why should they not have Leam to stay with them if they liked? and why should Madame say disagreeable little things in that smooth voice of hers which gave them such subtle power to wound? Josephine, in nowise high-spirited, was yet quietly indignant at Madame's late manner, and showed that she was by not going so much as formerly to Lionnet, and by speaking little when she did go.

On her side Madame eschewed the Hill. The continued stay of Frank was reason sufficient for her shrinking from close intercourse. She had fathomed her peril there, and confessed the enmity which might be so dangerous should it ever come to open war.

But indeed Frank had other things to think of—Carry Fairbairn among the number—and Madame had dropped out of his horizon. He did not care to hunt her down, nor track the secret he felt sure she was defending. He was willing she should live at North Aston, if she liked the dull old hole, provided she lived unostentatiously, put no silly ideas into Joseph's head, and did not borrow money of the mother.

All this played well for Mr. Dundas, who was thus able to court Madame and the Harrowbys at the same time, without chance of collision or the danger of notes compared and conversations repeated. Steering among these small social rocks, self-created, was just the amusement he liked, and he played his double game and handled his contemptible little bark with wonderful tact and skill. Nevertheless, Madame was his true centre. Whatever his excursions he always returned to her.

When Mrs. Harrowby advised a governess he went off to Lionnet, "hot foot," to hear his dear friend's mind thereon.

"You know so much more of the world than I do, dear Madame," he said in his submissive, flattering way.

She smiled, accepting the compliment.

"And knowing it so well, I am perhaps rather more cautious than my neighbours," she said. "Caution is not necessarily suspicion," she added. "Young Mr. Harrowby is suspicious; I am not that."

"Oh, Frank is a fool!" cried Mr. Dundas, a little coarsely. "I am glad you do not like him. How should you indeed, such a conceited puppy as it is!"

"Yet you are not afraid for sweet Leam?" asked Madame, with a smile. "She is more likely to be caught than me."

"Leam! Why Leam is a child and made of wood!" cried her father.

"'Still waters run deep;' and her mother was a Spaniard," returned Madame.

"Good heavens, Madame! why, you don't mean to say——" began Sebastian excitedly.

She laid her hand on his arm.

"My good friend, I don't mean to say anything," she replied in a quiet voice; "I only wish to point out the fact that Leam is not a child—Spanish blood at fourteen is up to English blood at eighteen; that young Mr. Francis Harrowby is a most undesirable young man; that your daughter is your heiress; and that Mr. Francis wants money. This is all; but I will add, that Mrs. Harrowby, who is a shrewd old woman and knows her cards, has had Leam to the Hill and is now taking it on herself to advise you what to do with her. There is no treason in all this!" smiling. "Surely, my dear friend, it is print which those who run may read."

"I cannot think that Mrs. Harrowby has ulterior views," said Mr. Dundas, looking annoyed.

To tell the truth, he thought she had ulterior views, but not touching Leam.

"Well, we will assume she has not; now let us discuss the governess scheme," said Madame with perfect tranquillity. "A governess for my sweet Leam? To tell you the truth, dear Mr. Dundas, I am not fond of governesses for motherless girls."

"No! Why?" he asked.

She looked down; then she looked up.

"They are often cruel to the poor little dears," she answered simply; and Mr. Dundas, whose imagination had again gone on another track, tapped his boot impatiently, his face dark with disappointment, while hers with difficulty suppressed a smile.

"It can stand over," he then said after a pause.

"Yes," answered Madame, "it can stand over, as you say. There is no hurry for a decision to-day or to-morrow; and by waiting events clarify themselves."

He looked at her eagerly when she said this; but she met his eyes with the unexcited gaze characteristic of hers, and he could not read even

the shadow of a thought deeper than her words. It was a truism she had uttered, that was all.

"Meantime I might perhaps accept Josephine's offer, and in spite of that formidable Frank and the old lady's designs let Leam go to the Hill three or four times a week, till I can see my way to a better arrangement," then said Mr. Dundas in a reflective vein, hoping to pique his fair friend into some kind of demonstration.

The faintest possible tinge of colour broke through the smooth outside of the well-arranged face.

"Yes, you might do that," she said with perfect equanimity; "Josephine would like it."

"Do you advise it?"

His tone was cold, his manner offended.

"No," said Madame sweetly; "I do not advise it; unless indeed," also with a reflective air, "you have motives."

Mr. Dundas flamed up.

"What motives?" he asked, almost in the same tone as that to which Pepita had been so long accustomed, the habit of disrespect from men to women being dangerously easy to acquire, and as easy to transfer.

Madame raised her eyes with a certain serious rebuke shining in them. How pretty she was! how perfectly well-bred! How could he have spoken to her so roughly!

"Unless you intend to marry the dear girl," she said quietly. "That also would suit Mrs. Harrowby quite as well as the other—indeed better."

"What can you be thinking of, Madame!" cried Mr. Dundas, this time his severity affected. In reality he was pleased that she had said this thing. It meant either jealousy for her own part or the confession of his attractions generally.

"Of what am I thinking? Of what Josephine is," replied the Marquise with a placid smile.

"Tut, tut!" he said; "you must be dreaming, my sweet friend."

"Are you?" she returned.

He bent his head nearer to her.

"Sometimes I do," he answered in a low voice.

"It is an unprofitable employment," said Madame rising. "Shall I ask Mr. Birkett, who is coming up the garden, to lecture you on such waste of time?"

"How do I know it is waste of time?" answered Sebastian hurriedly.

"Dreams come true sometimes."

She smiled tranquilly. "Yes, you are right, they do, but not often," she answered, moving to the door to greet her friendly pastor.

When Madame's visitor left her that afternoon she went upstairs into her own room, where she first double-locked the door, then unlocked a box, whence she took a packet carefully wrapped in many covers, and labelled on the outside "In case of my death to be given to the name inside."

One by one she came to the treasures within. These were first, a large green velvet pocket-book, with the letters V. and E. combined in a monogram, worked elaborately in gold on the cover. Beneath the monogram was a violet, also wrought in gold. The case contained about a dozen letters and notes; four photographs—one of herself, one of a young man, one of both together sitting in a friendly attitude, with their hands clasped and his arm round her shoulders, and the fourth, that of a little baby in her arms; a lock of short curling hair of a bright-brown colour—a man's hair, not a woman's; some visiting-cards, not bearing the name of Madame de Montfort with a coronet at the top as now, but plain Mrs. Harrington; and a gold locket with the same monogram V. and E. on one side in pearls, on the other a violet, in diamonds; within were the same photographs as before—in one oval the man, in the other herself.

Madame looked at all these treasures attentively; read the letters through, one by one, then laid them in their order carefully, methodically, and tied them up again in their band of rose-coloured ribbon. She examined the photographs, and smoothed the thick ring of bright-brown hair over her supple fingers, a certain emotion in her well-preserved face—but emotion subdued and under control, emotion that respected cosmetics and was nowhere near to passion. Then she returned all in the same order as before; wrapped her precious pocket-book in many papers, and laid the packet at the bottom of her trunk, covered carefully with some of her reserve force of wardrobe. This done, she sat by the window meditating.

From where she sat she could see the chimneys of the Hill peering above the famous avenue of double chestnuts, lying about three miles to the right. Not more than half a mile away, near the river, was the pretty and less pretentious place which Mr. Dundas had named in his early lovetime "Andalusia Cottage," but which maps and old itineraries set down as "Ford House." She turned her eyes from one to the other, and by the look of her she might have been casting up a sum. Perhaps she was—a sum of chances and the greater algebraic value of a commonplace kind of bird in the hand over one handsomer, better portioned, more sufficing, more desirable in the bush—a sum of times and duration, and how long that slender stock of bank-notes in her possession would last, and when the tradesmen would demand to have their accounts settled, and fair words would be found unable to stave off rainy days; a sum of forces, and how much influence the fear of exposure would have over a man in good position, the son of a model English family respectable to its finger-tips, when he should come home and have to choose between marriage and denunciation—marriage or his secret life in London laid bare, and his iniquities proclaimed to his scandalised relations; a sum of balance and comparative values—on the one side the love of a dishonoured past, on the other the security of an unloving future.

The casting-up was apparently in part unsatisfactory, for she sighed

once or twice as people do who have decided for their interest against their inclination; though to do her justice she had not the weakness to pretend even to herself that she was a martyr because she had elected to forego a splendid possibility for a sufficing certainty. Whatever the faults of Madame la Marquise de Montfort might be they were not those of mental debility, and she knew nothing of that moral cowardice which calls the ugly things of the mind by noble names. At this present moment she knew quite well what she was doing, and why she was doing it. She was deciding on selling herself for rest, and on burying the flowers of truth and love with a golden spade.

Her reverie ended as the Harrowby carriage drew up at her door; this visit to Madame having hung like a millstone round the neck of Mrs. Harrowby's conscience for the last three weeks or so. Indeed her visits to Lionnet were social debts never paid willingly by the lady of the Hill, and always postponed to the last limits of decency. To-day she was accompanied by Maria and Josephine, as shields to protect her when the asperities which were so sure to arrive were on hand; Maria as her buckler with a spike, Josephine as her buffer covered in velvet.

After the usual greetings made in the graceful manner of suave superiority which was Madame's way, and which always irritated Mrs. Harrowby, conscious as she was of her own place of pride as an English lady, the widow of one man of high county standing and the mother of another—while this Madame la Marquise de Montfort was a myth sprung from no one knew where, belonging to no one knew whom, an enigma whereof no one had the key, a fable with a questionable moral—Madame, turning to Josephine said blandly:

"Mr. Dundas was telling me to-day, dear girl, of your generous offer to teach our poor dear Leam. It was very kind; a maternal act truly charitable and much needed."

Josephine blushed and looked confused. She wished Madame had not said that word maternal. It struck too near the secret centre of her thoughts to be pleasant, spoken out broadly like this; and she feared it might enlighten her mother, who as yet had not seen Sebastian in this offer of quasi governesshood to Leam—had not connected feeling for the father with her interest in the girl.

Turning from Josephine to Mrs. Harrowby, Madame continued: "And that is just what the poor child wants, is it not, Mrs. Harrowby?—a mother, such as our dear Josephine would make, to guide and direct her, and make her fit for her future position as the wife of an English gentleman, like Mr. Francis, for instance?"

"Josephine would make rather a young mother for a girl of Leam's age!" retorted Mrs. Harrowby tartly.

Truly Madame de Montfort had the most irritating effect on her! Whatever she said annoyed her, and each time they met Mrs. Harrowby mentally vowed should be the last.

Madame looked at her amiably.

"I do not think Mr. Dundas considers her too young for such a post," she said with her sweetest smile.

"Madame! how can you say anything so gross, so insulting!" cried Mrs. Harrowby, her pale and puckered face aflame with indignation.

She wished her daughters to marry, certainly, but she did not like their chances discussed.

"What have I said?" asked Madame still amiably, a little bewilderment superadded.

"It is a most unpleasant insinuation," cried Mrs. Harrowby. "We are not used to such things at North Aston."

She said this as if North Aston was some sacred city where no unclean thing was suffered to enter.

"No! no insinuation at all, dear Mrs. Harrowby," returned Madame with graceful equanimity, but still holding to her point. "I have not studied life so long and under such varied experiences not to understand my alphabet. The thing is as clear as"—early habit of speech prompted mud, reflection substituted—"daylight; if Mr. Dundas does profit by my friend Josephine's sweet offer it means marriage and nothing else. Why," smiling at Mrs. Harrowby in a sisterly confidential way, "you and I are too old, dear lady, not to understand that! A child could see it."

"In which case I should decidedly forbid the whole thing," Mrs. Harrowby answered, pulling irritably at her crape and looking for support to her eldest daughter, who, after the manner of eldest daughters in general, was gradually gaining the ascendancy over her mind. "It shall never be said that we manœuvred for Mr. Dundas!"

Madame raised her eyebrows.

"It would be a pity to forbid such a promising arrangement!" she said. "What does it signify what people say? Why not let them marry if they like? You must give young people opportunities!"

"Madame! do not, pray," pleaded poor Josephine, nearly crying from shame and vexation.

"Don't what?" answered Madame, with the look of a French *ingénue*. "Why should I not? I am only pleading your cause, dear!"

"Surely Madame de Montfort forgets to whom she is speaking," said Mrs. Harrowby with dignity.

"No indeed," she answered with a sweet and pleasant little laugh; "I am speaking to my friend Josephine, who would make one of the best wives in the world, and who has, if I am not mistaken, a very warm place in her heart for our poor widower; while he on his side only wants a little wise encouragement to respond as a gentleman should when he wishes to reward a fidelity that is both pretty and touching."

"Wherever else you may have learnt the ways of the match-making world, pray do not try to give lessons here," cried Miss Harrowby angrily.

Madame raised her eyebrows for the second time. They were well-marked eyebrows, many shades darker than her hair.

"No?" she answered innocently. "Why do you say that? What have I said wrong?"

"I do not think one of my daughters exactly the kind of girl to fall in love with a married man, or to offer herself as you suggest," returned Mrs. Harrowby glacially. "The mere supposition is an insult."

"You forget, too, that Mr. Dundas has been our friend for life; both before and after he was married," added Maria eagerly, conscious on her own side of thoughts and wishes once harboured in her heart that would scarcely bear translation into words. But hers was an old dream, begun and cherished long before that fatal visit to Spain which had blown her castle to the ground and rasped her on the bare boards of disappointment. Josephine's was a later and more sentimental matter; a question of pity overflowing its borders and passing into the regions akin.

"No indeed, I do not forget your old friendship," Madame replied with a certain meaning accent. "That is just why I thought a marriage between Mr. Dundas and my dear Josephine would be so pleasant, so suitable."

"Don't, don't, Madame," again murmured Josephine.

"Madame, one word for all; I cannot allow this subject to be discussed," said Mrs. Harrowby with all her stiffest dignity, her iciest displeasure. "If I thought that you had the smallest ground for your assertion I would forbid Mr. Dundas my house."

"Mamma!" this time pleaded poor Josephine, set between two fires and scorched cruelly at both.

"Surely!" remonstrated Madame, representing worldly wisdom.

"Mamma would do quite right. Indeed she could do nothing else," said Miss Harrowby.

Madame looked from one to the other with perplexed amazement perfectly translated.

"I am sorry I made any remark," she said slowly. "I fear I have done harm."

"You have done good," returned Mrs. Harrowby, still dignified and icy. "It is always useful to know what others think and to be on one's guard against vulgar mistakes and spiteful misrepresentations."

Madame slightly shrugged her shoulders. Her dear friends were terribly unreasonable, and she wished them to understand that she thought them so. Husbands were evidently not too plentiful in North Aston; why then starve a promising plant? nip in the bud a potential bloom? For her own part, had she been the mother of three matured and maiden daughters, she would have cultivated Mr. Dundas assiduously; and so she meant it to be inferred as she said in her smooth inoffensive voice:—

"But dear Mrs. Harrowby, it would surely be such a pleasure to you to see one of your dear girls settled comfortably, and in such a pretty house as Andalusia Cottage, too! And then Mr. Dundas is such a perfect gentleman; and if Leam, sweet child, is peculiar, she is very interesting. I think it would be just delightful!"

Before Mrs. Harrowby could reply, Maria broke in :—

"If you are so vastly pleased with Mr. Dundas and Andalusia Cottage, Madame," she said with bitterness, "why do you not take it all to yourself?"

"Ah!" said Madame, turning her fine eyes on the speaker with mournful rebuke; "you are cruel, Miss Harrowby. You forget my state!"

"Not so cruel as you have been to us!" cried Maria.

"Are any of you widows of late date?" asked Madame, still with the same mournful rebuke. "In wishing to see one of you married to the man of her evident affections—the man of her choice—I do not bring before you lost happiness. I only wish to see you enjoy that state you have never known, and have so long desired."

"How dare you say long desired?" fired off Maria indignantly. "To hear you talk, one would think that Josephine was really in love with Mr. Dundas!"

"Would you, now?" returned Madame simply, with a friendly look to Josephine; "and you might make a worse guess," she added.

Upon which the three ladies rose, Mrs. Harrowby saying coldly: "As the conversation has taken such an unpleasant turn, all I can do is to end it;" and so, without shaking hands, only bowing, they stiffly conveyed themselves away, leaving Madame mistress of the position in that she had done that which she had intended to do.

For the upshot of this conversation was a cool note from Mrs. Harrowby to Sebastian Dundas, withdrawing the offer which her daughter Josephine had made to help Miss Dundas in her studies, without reason assigned or regret expressed. She was angry at the necessity under which she felt of doing this—angry with Madame, with Josephine, with Sebastian, with herself, with everybody concerned and a great many who were not concerned. She would have been very glad indeed had this marriage come about by natural and pleasant means; and she had even allowed the thought to cross her mind in its deepest recesses more than once since Pepita died. But when it came to a cold business-like calculation, a confessed act of angling as put by Madame—then all the native pride of the English lady woke up in her heart; and rather than appear to be planning for her daughter's settlement she cut the ground from under her own feet, and made the poor girl unhappy because she had not sufficient moral courage to despise insinuations and defy gossip.

On her side Madame felt safe. She knew enough of Mrs. Harrowby to be quite sure that she would not give the true reason of her sudden coolness. She was not the kind of woman to confess to any gentleman that she was afraid her daughter was in love with him, and that what she had offered in apparent friendship meant in reality a bold bid for marriage. And even if she should take such a decided step so utterly out of her own line, Madame knew Sebastian Dundas, and the strength of the chain she had laid on his neck.

It all came about as she had designed. Mr. Dundas rushed off to her in hot haste to tell her of this unaccountable break in the harmony of his relations with the Hill. He was full of it, as a grievance demanding the universe for an audience, and he exhausted conjecture as to the cause, without coming within bowshot of the truth.

Madame listened attentively, sympathetically; gave her mind to it as a story she had not known until now; and busied herself in exhausting conjecture side by side with him, also keeping out of bowshot of the truth.

At last, raising her eyes to him with that calm look for which she was famous, she said in a quiet voice :—

"I tell you what it is, my friend. Mrs. Harrowby sees things as I saw them, if you remember; and knows that this scheme of Josephine's making herself Leam's governess means marriage if you accept it and it is carried out. She wants therefore to bring you to the point, and it is in fact a polite way of asking your intentions."

"No," said Mr. Dundas with a fatuous smile.

"Yes," said Madame with a serious look.

He laughed. He was not displeased, and he was not surprised. He had been too long accustomed to air his griefs against Pepita not to know how sincere was the pity awarded to him by the ladies at the Hill. And he knew too, that had not Madame come in between, at this time he would have been preparing the ground for Josephine's future decorous instalment as the mistress of his house and the sharer of his fortune. As it was, his hopes were centered here, not there, and poor Josephine's long years of faithful friendship went for nothing weighed against Madame's improved fascinations.

"At all events," he said, looking at his siren tenderly, "I have no intention of asking Miss Josephine to be my wife. She is a nice good girl, and I dare say would make a man happy enough; but she is not the wife for me."

"No," said Madame quietly, "I should not think she was quite up to your mark. When you marry again, you must not make a mistake a second time!"

"I do not mean to do so," he answered with meaning.

To which she replied tranquilly, "I am glad of it."

CHAPTER XVI.

MADAME'S UNJUST STEWARD.

MADAME DE MONTFORT's correspondence, as a rule, was of the most meagre dimensions. She seldom wrote letters and still more rarely received them; but for some days after these last interviews with the Harrowbys and Mr. Dundas she was busy with her pen, and both sent and received much curious literature.

Among the rest came a letter signed her "affectionate brother-in-law, Julius de Montfort," telling her that their old family lawyer and trustee, one Mr. Blanc, had proved himself a thorough rogue, and had levanted with all the De Montfort treasure, family plate, diamonds, leases, bonds, money—her own dowry and her child's portion included.

This letter, which was in good English enough, was written in a London tradesman's hand on English paper, but dated from the Hôtel de Louvre in Paris. It was stiffly worded if kindly intentioned; and one phrase, "as per advice," came with a curious twang from the hand of a French marquis. It expressed the writer's regret at being the bearer of such ill news, and feared that his poor sister-in-law would feel the blow hard, coming so soon after her great loss. But it counselled courage and industry, according to her known qualities, and advocated "governessing" as the most suitable thing for her.

"With your talents and acquirements, my dear Virginie," it said, "you cannot be long in finding some such situation. I would, if I was you, look out for some good widower with young ladies to drill and bring out. That would be more in your line, I fancy, than a parcel of young ones to teach their alphabet to."

Alphabet spelt with an f was not detected by Madame as an error.

After reading this letter Madame heroically anointed her eyes with some pungent ointment that caused the lids to swell and redden and brought tears in plentiful abundance; after which she wrote to Mr. Birkett, her sheet-anchor in all her storms.

It was a pretty little note full of "appologies" for the liberty she was taking; but saying would her kind pastor step down to her at his earliest convenience? She had just received news that would make his presence very comforting and valuable; also dear Mrs. Birkett, if she cared to give the time. She needed advice and "assistance" at this moment more than she had ever done before!

It never occurred to her to go up to the rectory for this advice and assistance. It was not her way to derange herself even for her own affairs; putting her friends under requisition being more the kind of thing to which she was accustomed. And as people can generally work their world as they set themselves to pull the strings, it was the fashion at North Aston to attend on Madame de Montfort because she made it evident that she did not mean to attend on herself. The ladies sometimes thought her unreasonable in sending for their lords at all hours, but then women are always spiteful to each other, and the gentlemen gave no heed but went.

"I wonder what is amiss," said Mr. Birkett anxiously as he handed the note to his wife, a little wincing at the spelling.

"She wants money," said Adelaide with a sneer.

The thought was not quite original. She had heard Frank once say: "The touchstone will be if ever she asks for money; and mark my words she will ask for it!"

Before Madame's arrival the rector had rarely been angry with Adelaide. She had managed him with consummate skill, and had been the joy of his life, if its mistress. Now they were always at odds together, and as Adelaide once said to Josephine, her father had never spoken a kind word to her since that odious woman came. Nevertheless she held to the line she had taken from the first, and was for ever provoking his displeasure by her enmity to his friend.

"You are harsh and unwomanly, Adelaide," he said angrily, when she suggested the pattern of Madame's need; while Mrs. Birkett put in more gently, "My dear, is this quite charitable?"

"No, it is only true, and time will prove it," said Adelaide coolly; whereat her father answering, "If you do not respect yourself, Adelaide, I must beg you to respect my friend and your mother's," turned his shoulder and ignored her for the remainder of the discussion.

"At all events I must go down and see what the poor dear creature wants," he said fussily, when his brush with Adelaide was over.

"Yes, that is only right, dear," replied Mrs. Birkett, good easy soul. "Give her my love, poor thing, and say I am too busy to go out this morning"—she meant she was too lazy—"but tell her to send up the baby for a few hours. It may be a relief to have the little one taken off her hands to-day."

"Yes, I will, my dear," said the rector, the softened tones of his voice thanking her for her sympathy. For indeed her conduct to Madame had made him love her more than he had ever loved her before—it was such a sweet contrast, he used to say, to the average Englishwoman's jealous exclusiveness, making marriage such bondage and a husband such a mere slave as she does!

"If you are going to have that odious baby here, mamma, I will go to the Hill," said Adelaide in her coldest manner, meaning her mother to give way, as once she would have done.

But Mrs. Birkett had no thought of giving way. She wanted the baby to play with, and she did not regret her daughter's absence; so she simply said, "Yes, do dear, it will amuse you;" and her voice showed her relief. "For really," as she afterwards complained to her husband, "that dear girl's temper grows worse day by day, and she makes me quite unhappy with her dislikes and her fancies! She cannot be simple and easy and take things as they come, but is always looking for mysteries and finding faults no one else sees. As for poor dear Madame de Montfort, she hates her so unreasonably she even dislikes that sweet child because of her!"

To which the rector answered in an angry tone: "She is certainly strangely prejudiced against Madame. I have never seen her so unamiable before, and I cannot understand it now. But I will not allow her to treat the poor creature with rudeness. She and I will quarrel if she does!"

Leaving his wife and Adelaide, however, to settle their present differences

as they best could, the rector went off to his fair friend to hear what news she had for him, and to give her his best advice thereon.

He was struck by her air as he entered. Subdued and evidently penetrated by sorrow, those red and swollen lids evidences of some severe affliction, she was yet so noble, so self-sustained, so grandly calm and gracious in her strength! It seemed to him he had never seen her so beautiful, so morally superior to the rest of womankind. She gave him the impression of some stately priestess on whom a mortal hurt has fallen, but who, remembering always that she is a priestess, one consecrated to the noble life and the manifestation of strength and grace, disdains the weak lamentation and childish outcry of meaner women.

"Something terrible has happened, my dear friend," said the rector, holding her hand in both of his and speaking with sincere emotion.

"Yes," she said with a patient smile, "something terrible indeed! But sit down, dear Mr. Birkett. I need not fatigue you in body as well as in mind." Here she smiled again—that sad sweet smile of hers which was more pathetic than the tears of other women. "I am sure I must have tired you by now with all my trouble and disasters."

"Not at all, not at all! Don't say that!" repeated the rector. "I am so sorry that you have these heavy crosses to bear."

"This is second only to the worst of all—that terrible loss I can never get over," said Madame.

"Ah! I am sorry," he said, "What is it?"

"Briefly this—I am ruined!" said Madame, crossing her hands on her lap.

The rector gave a little gasp. He remembered Adelaide's words; was it possible they were true?

"Read this, my friend, and then you will know as much as I can tell you," continued Madame, who had seen his momentary look of terror.

She put into his hands the letter signed Julius de Montfort, written as an English tradesman would have written it, on Bath post but dated from Paris. "That is from my brother-in-law," she said; "and now you know all!"

"Villain!" cried the rector as he read, Madame's bright eyes watching him keenly the while. The sight of the letter banished his suspicions, if indeed that passing terror could be called suspicion at all; he trusted Madame too loyally to imagine her capable of a planned deception. Had she asked him outright for a loan, Adelaide might have been right; but this was quite different; and this carried its own proof with it. And when he said "Villain!" so energetically, and struck the letter angrily with his hand, she drew a deep breath and uncrossed the taper fingers so closely entwined on her lap. She knew now that she was safe.

"What shall I do?" she asked, when Mr. Birkett had read the letter for the second time. "I see nothing before me but to follow my brother's advice and make myself a governess. May I come to you for a character?" with touching cheerfulness.

The rector could not answer for a moment. His clerical tie had suddenly become tight about his throat.

"Surely," he said at last, with an effort; "if such a painful necessity exists, you can command me."

"Thanks, dear friend. I knew I could count on you!" replied Madame de Montfort gratefully. "But alas! what can I do about my child? It would break my heart to be separated from her, and who will take a baby of a year old with a governess?"

"My wife would take charge of the child for a while until you had looked about you," began the rector; and then he stopped, a little doubtfully.

He did not object to the occasional presence of the baby at the rectory. It pleased his wife, and was not an exorbitant price to pay for the pleasure of Madame's society. But a baby *en permanence*, and no Madame at hand as compensation!—he hesitated visibly, and the cordiality dropped out of his voice.

"Ah!" said Madame with feeling; "you are not a mother, my friend. Do you think I could let my sweet one go from me?—not even to such a second self as dearest Mrs. Birkett!"

"The only thing will be, then, to find a situation as daily governess, where you can keep your own house," said the rector, a pang passing through him as he thought of Sebastian Dundas—the very thing for her lying at her gate.

"So I think and feel," returned Madame. "But where to find this phoenix of a widower with young ladies to educate and introduce?"

She looked into his face, and he shifted his eyes uneasily.

"I do not know," he said.

"Nor I," she sighed. Looking round her room she added; "It is a pity to have to leave it all when I have made my little place so pretty."

There was a silence.

"I am a true woman," she continued softly. "I care for my house and home; and now that I have got used to my life at Lionnet, and have made such good friends here, I do not like the idea of leaving and turning out into the bare, bleak world beyond."

Her eyes were mournful, her voice full of sadness. The rector felt pushed back on his magnanimity. It cost him an effort, nevertheless he knew that as a gentleman he must make it. Between losing her altogether, while letting her confront who knows what dangers out in the perilous world beyond, and opening a door for that fellow Dundas, his conscience forbade him to hesitate. He was a small-headed man truly, proud and pumpkin-like, but he was a gentleman; and his inherited instincts held him straight if certain other of his natural qualities would have driven him astray.

"There is Mr. Dundas," he then said a little stiffly.

Madame's tranquil face gave no sign.

"Leam?" she said, interrogatively.

"Yes," replied the rector.

She shook her head.

"A task, I fear, beyond my strength," she answered. "I should not like to try and fail."

"You would not fail," cried the rector, as her champion against herself.

She smiled. "You are a partial judge," she answered. "You rate me too high."

"Could I?" he answered almost tenderly.

He was so grateful to her that she had not flown at his suggestion. Then she had no feeling for Sebastian? and having no feeling there was no danger.

The rector did not like contradiction. Having offered the suggestion he stuck to it. She *must* be Leam's instructress; on all the wide face of the earth this was the only thing she could do or ought to do, and he bent the whole force of his mind and will to force her to accept his suggestion as a religious obligation. It cost him some time and trouble to make her see this matter as her duty—her duty to herself and her child, and—taking lofty ground—poor motherless, desolate Leam as well; but he gradually made way, and gained on her reluctance.

She was open to conviction, as indeed she always was; being one of those fine reasonable women who allow the masculine intellect its due weight in their deliberations, and are pretty sure to show their superiority by yielding to it at last. But she yielded only slowly and by degrees. It was not the thing she wanted, she said; not what she had thought of in any way. She was afraid of the task, and she was not quite sure that Mr. Dundas would like it.

But when she said this the rector snorted like a war-horse, and answered angrily: "Not like it! Why, how could that fellow Dundas ever look for such a blessing? It is more than he deserves a thousandfold!"

Then Madame threw up her hands, smiling.

"I yield! I yield!" she cried. "I will see Mr. Dundas, and tell him that it is at your sanction and desire, indeed by your express suggestion, that I offer myself to him as Leam's governess, and if he thinks my doing so is a freedom he is to talk to you about it."

To which the rector answered: "Yes, do so; it is the best way of putting it; and I am glad to be your shield and buckler in this matter."

"You have been my shield and buckler all through," said Madame prettily. "But for you I should never have been here at all."

When the rector left, bearing a message to Mr. Dundas from Madame, asking him to come and see her, and intending for his own part to suggest the scheme he had just been discussing to save her the awkwardness of doing so, Madame flung herself into her easy chair and, covering her face, laughed aloud.

It all seemed so droll to her; such simplicity, such blindness, such childish faith! She wondered where a man like Mr. Birkett could have

packed away the worldly knowledge he must have gained in his sixty years' passage through life, to be so easily deceived as he was by her.

"I always thought it," she said to herself, still laughing; "men are the vainest creatures on the face of the earth! Talk of women, the weakest of us all is not so soft as a man, if taken in the right way—flattered as he likes to be flattered, and treated as something infinitely superior, not only to poor little us, that is of course, but to every other man. These two dear, stupid schoolboys of mine, I govern them both with lollipops!—simply flatter and cajole, and have them both at my feet. If I did not know the world and men so well, I should say I was one of the cleverest women out; and, for the matter of that, I am pretty well; but it is not that so much, as that they are the biggest fools. How easy it has all been! and my unnecessary terrors!"

On which she laughed again; but remembering that Mr. Dundas was to be here soon, she composed her face to the proper nobly sad expression she wished it to wear, and sat waiting for his advent, knitting a baby's sock.

Had Madame de Montfort been a queen to whom Sebastian Dundas was kneeling, while pleading for her grace, he could not have thrown more respect, more homage, into his words and manner than when he came now to Lionnet to beseech this unknown tenant of his to live here, in his house, rent-free, and to accept a handsome salary for teaching his daughter doubtful orthography and defective syntax. He forestalled all she wished to say. The rector had told him enough—quite as much as it was necessary he should know, he said—and now the thing must be considered settled. If one steward had proved himself unjust, others would be found faithful, and the future must atone for the past. So long as he lived, he said with tears in his eyes and an almost boyish passion of devotion in his face, she should never want a friend, and if she wished to make him happy she must put him to the test and make him of use to her.

For a moment Madame felt ashamed of the pitiful cheat she was enacting. Contrasted with all this earnestness and truth, what a heartless sham she was! Not that she suffered herself to be turned from her main point by remorse or shame. She was fighting for dear life, and she meant, when she had got what she wanted, to make no bad use of it. On the contrary, she would be a blessing to them all—the light of his days, and the tender guardian of the child. The end justified the means, and if she had to gain that end by crooked means, the fault lay with society which will not bear the truth, not with her because she dare not tell it.

So she reasoned and sophisticated, and soon talked to sleep that starved, somnolent thing she called her conscience, and made herself believe that she was doing right, eminently right, by deceiving Sebastian Dundas to his happiness and Leam's gain, and by making the rector her stalking-horse for the sake of the respectabilities involved. She had her part to play, and she played it well. Indeed, she did most things well, clever as she was.

She accepted the tone her landlord took as the homage due to her womanhood in the first place, to her rank as Madame de Montfort in the second. She confessed her indebtedness frankly, but in a grand, almost regal, manner—her very confession itself a grace—and she agreed to his terms with the quiet dignity of one who was giving honour and receiving right. She spoke of her future influence over Leam without vulgar boasting, but with no affectation of undue modesty; seriously, in a fine, almost maternal spirit, as one knowing her full value and what she could do for others; and she let it be seen that she held that influence high and not overpaid at the price.

So thought Mr. Dundas, and so he said effusively; to which she answered gravely, "And perhaps you are right. There are certain things which money cannot buy or pay for."

The interview was a decided success all round. Not the faintest ray of light shot athwart the pleasant darkness in which the landlord of Lionnet was living; not the smallest slip in her perilous path betrayed the true moral whereabouts of Madame. The one shut his eyes and allowed himself to be hoodwinked with a docility partly contemptible, partly touching; the other fastened on the blind with no uncertain hand, and spurned Truth as a slave behind her. The end each had in view was accomplished. Sebastian Dundas had secured the right of closer daily intercourse with Madame; Madame had secured her present maintenance for the one-part, and her future marriage with her landlord for the other; the last falling so naturally, coming so much as of course from all that had gone before, that the place would accept it quietly and not be stirred into inconvenient excitement. For excitement might lead to questioning, and questioning might entail answers. Leam, at the worst, would take no harm from what it pleased Madame la Marquise de Montfort to call her views on education. If the girl was taught only how to hold her knife and fork properly, it would be so much to the good; and Madame, though herself substantially uneducated, was many degrees Leam's superior. Malice itself could not find a loophole whence to shoot its poisoned shafts, and the various parts of the puzzle fitted to perfection. But the Harrowbys and Adelaide Birkett laughed significantly when they heard of the unjust steward and the subsequent arrangement, and Josephine had red eyes for several days after.

She got a little consolation from Adelaide's merciless suggestions as to the real state and condition of this strange woman. She had neither the wit nor the courage to think sharp things of herself, but she was pleased at her friend's bold cleverness; and the intimacy between the two, which had slackened during these late months—indeed ever since Madame's advent—was knit up into more than its former closeness. Josephine had her griefs to avenge, and Adelaide's sarcastic tongue did this work for her; while to Adelaide herself there was always Edgar in the background, and the day when he must return. And it was this fact of Edgar's return that made her hate Madame so bitterly on the one hand,

for fear of her undeniable sirenhood, and hold by the elderly sisters so closely on the other, for hope of the result of her intimacy. For indeed the Hill was a splendid property; and Edgar was not unpersonable.

So there was reason enough why the two should be continually together again, and why Madame should smile to herself at the harmlessness of their revenge. She had the substance safe and could well afford them the shadow as their target. It was like fighting with a cloud to try conclusions with Madame. She never showed when she was hit. Her smile was just as sweet, her manner just as even, her speech and greeting just as smooth and genial as before. She betrayed no consciousness of cause, no perception of results. No coolness could dull her; impertinent looks and smiles fell dead; and not the most stinging sarcasm could irritate her to sharp reply. She caught all their spears on her shield; and her shield was impenetrable. Thus the unspoken feud burnt slowly on; the girls watchful and inimical, but Madame determined not to give the enemy cause to rejoice by any imprudence on her side. Even Frank was forced to admit that she bore herself with consummate skill, and that she was the cleverest woman he knew.

"Too clever to be good," said Mrs. Harrowby, true to her colourless code of feminine negation; and her daughters echoed the sentiment.

Meanwhile Leam underwent a daily torture, the effect of which was to harden her more and more to the world outside, while driving her deeper into that recess where was her stronghold. She hated her lessons, not because they were lessons but because they were things mamma had not taught her, and would have laughed to scorn had she heard. It seemed to her an injury to mamma that she should learn all these funny things about places and people, the stars and the animals, that Madame read to her from ugly little books, and that mamma had never known.

But what could she do? It was to no good that she sometimes ran away and hid for a whole day in one special part of Steel's Wood, braving the unknown perils of wild beasts and armed banditti to be found therein, if only she might escape Madame. She thought she would rather run the danger of being devoured by the wolves and lions which she had not a doubt made their home in the dark parts of the wood, or of being carried off by the brigands who lived in the caves, than go to Madame to feel that her mother was being insulted when unable to avenge herself, and that she, her little Leam, her own sweet Heart, had joined hands in the blow!

Still, running away was of no avail. To escape one day out of seven or eight might be a gain of so many hours, but the permanent arrangement held fast. That went on whether she braved the perils of the wild beasts and armed banditti or not; and the only result of her absence to-day was to be taken personally in deep disgrace by her father to-morrow, scolded all the way there, and received by Madame with maddening friendliness at the end.

Leam thought she could have borne it better had Madame been cold and severe rather than so uniformly caressing and amiable. Had she

rated her or even beaten her as her mother used to do, she would have been less reluctant, because she would have had something tangible to go on. As it was, she too felt as if beating herself against a cloud, and the plentiful outpour of honey in exchange for her own gall sickened her. That pleasant smile, those endearing words, that inexhaustible patience, revolted the girl, who saw in her smoothfaced "governess" only the woman whom her mother had distrusted and disliked. For herself personally, without those haunting reminiscences, she would have liked Madame well enough; but now—it would be unfaithful to mamma, and Leam could not be that! Living as she did in the one ever active thought of her mother's unseen presence and continued existence, the influence of the past was never weakened; and Leam's heart clung to the mother unseen as her little arms used to cling round her in the days of her bodily existence.

When the ladies of North Aston took it in hand to teach this young savage faith in the life after death, they did not think they were opening such a crooked door as this!

Thus the relations between Madame la Marquise de Montfort and her pupil were not exactly what might be termed of ideal harmoniousness; but Madame never confessed her failure. On the contrary, she always spoke of Leam as a most fascinating child, charming to teach and interesting to study, and as improving daily under her care.

And when the neighbours said dubiously, "We do not see the improvement," she only smiled more sweetly than usual as she answered with her serene and noble air, "But I am conscious of it."

ve
go
ne
r.
e,
ne
elf
ed
nd
ve
be
ne
of

og
g

er
;
ys
s-

a-
d



"MAMMA, MAMMA, LEAVE OFF CRYING; THERE IS NO ONE IN YOUR PLACE NOW."

